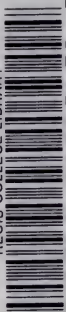


REGIS COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 1761 04813691 5

THE PERFECT LAY-BROTHER



FELIX CUMPLIDO, S. J.

A. M. D. G.

LORETTO ABBEY

ST. ALOYSIUS LIBRARY

You are requested neither to abuse
nor lend this book. Extra charge will
be made for any injury.

No.

Press 6 — Shelf 6.

JESUIT
BIBL. MAJ.
SEMINARY



ST. JOSEPH'S ASCETICAL LIBRARY.

EDITED BY FATHERS S.J.

No. X.

THE PERFECT LAY-BROTHER.

JESUIT
BIBL. MAJ.
SEMINARY

ROEHAMPTON :
PRINTED BY JAMES STANLEY.

[*All rights reserved.*]

BX
2835
.66513
1874

THE
PERFECT LAY-BROTHER.

BY
FELIX CUMPLIDO,

PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

Translated by

JOHN G. MACLEOD,

Priest of the same Society.

JESUIT
BIBL. MAJ.
SEMINARY

LONDON :
BURNS AND OATES, PORTMAN STREET
AND PATERNOSTER ROW.

1874.

41933



PREFACE OF TRANSLATOR.

THE object of the present volume is to supply the lay-brothers of the Society with a text-book or manual, setting before them the peculiar blessings and advantages of their vocation, the religious spirit in which they should carry out generally the duties of their several offices, as well as, more in detail, the exact mode in which the obligations of each office should be performed. They will find, in this treatise on their state, those principles which can alone raise their daily manual work above the selfish or mere temporal interests of those who live and work in the world, and impart to it its real supernatural dignity and sanctity. In the chapter on general deportment in religion, especially as regards meals and recreation, the original work has been faithfully adhered to, with the view of showing the care, watchfulness, and consideration for others which should direct the lay-

brother during these duties, rather than that certain directions should be followed in the strictness of the letter when they do not correspond to the habits and customs of this country. We offer this little work to the notice of other Orders besides our own, having lay members employed in the temporal service of the community, as containing much instruction applicable to all, if read in a sense which will suit the minor differences to be found under different Institutes.

INTRODUCTION.

ALMIGHTY GOD has appointed two ways whereby men may attain eternal happiness : one, which the fathers and the teachers of the spiritual life call the contemplative way, represented by St. Mary Magdalen ; the other, the active way, or the active life, represented by her sister Martha.

Between these two lies a third path, which combining contemplation and action, the special characteristics of the other two, is consequently called the *mixed way*.

Such is the life of the Society of Jesus. All the members of this Society seek to promote the glory of God by prayer and labour ; those who are priests working for the good of souls by preaching, hearing confessions, &c., whilst the lay-brothers are engaged in such manual labour as Martha undertook for the glory and service of her beloved Master.

This division of labour is absolutely necessary, since the Society is a religious Order which has for its end

to work not only for the salvation and perfection of its own members, but with equal zeal and assiduity for the salvation and perfection of others. And as the human body, to use St. Paul's comparison,* consists of many different members, each of which has its special end and work in harmony with and dependence on the others, so in the body of the Society there must be a head to direct, eyes to study, learn, and teach, ears to hear confessions, lips to speak of God and announce His word, and besides, arms and hands to work, and feet to go wherever temporal affairs require our presence.

Now, dear lay-brothers, you are the arms, hands, and feet of our Society, you, who while sharing in its contemplative life devote yourselves to external works and the care of temporal things which are your portion of our mixed calling. And I, who desire nothing but your happiness and spiritual profit, intend to show you in this little work that your state of life, which the world thinks mean and contemptible, is all the more desirable in proportion as proud men think less of it and despise it.

As I am addressing those who have freely chosen this holy vocation, and who joyfully persevere in it without regard to the opinions of worldly men, I shall not need to dwell at any length on what you are already perfectly convinced of, namely, the excellence,

* 1 Cor. xii.

the advantages, and the happiness of your state. Now everything that can please and satisfy the heart of man is included under these three heads.

I shall have to enter into greater details in the chapter on general or particular direction, in order to help you to advance with constancy, by the love of prayer and labour, in that path of perfection which is peculiar to lay-brothers of the Society. My little book, then, will treat of this direction, it will provide for you a simple explanation of the particular duties attached to your various offices, it will suggest an easy method for fruitfully approaching the holy Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, it will contain a few rules of religious behaviour and politeness, and will close with a brief life of your holy protector and pattern, Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez. In him you will find a faithful picture of all the virtues which God and the Society wish and expect to find in you.

Yes, they desire simply to see the fruits of these in you, and therefore you will not find in this book much that is new or which you are not required to practise according to the letter and spirit of the rules; whether those which are common to all, or those which refer especially to lay-brothers and their various duties.

That you may see this the better, I shall point out the rule to which my remarks apply whenever

the subject will allow of it. Thus you will find that I have no intention of adding to your duties, but merely wish to help you to fulfil them, since they have sufficient efficacy to make you saints. And I do this in the hope that when you are saints, and even before, you will sometimes pray for one who has undertaken this little work out of love for you.

I know that I am not the first who has written such instructions, and I hope I shall not be the last, because you form a very interesting part of the Society; but later works perhaps you will never see, and mine can do no harm to what has been done before me.

And, indeed, however excellent other works may be, you will find it very difficult to meet with any which will contain all that is included in this little book.

You may, for instance, have probably heard or read the work of Father Francis Colin, Rector of the College of Manilla, entitled, *The Life, Works, and Instructions of the Venerable Brother Alphonsus Rodriguez, Religious of the Society of Jesus*; and in the Preface to this work, which was written for the lay-brothers of the provinces of Spain and the East Indies, you will have observed with what learning and vigour he has treated, firstly of the end and the spiritual advantages of the brothers of the Society, secondly of the qualities which the Institution requires in them, thirdly of the lives of several lay-brothers who have become eminent in the

Church as martyrs or confessors, and have by their brilliant virtues reflected great glory on this grade in the Society. Now everything that is essential in this work you will find in mine, and a great deal of practical matter besides, which this author does not treat of, and which did not enter into his plan, since it was quite a different one from my own.

You will find here, too, the substance of a rare and valuable little work of the Venerable Father Nicolas Lancisius, addressed to lay-brothers, and entitled, *On the state of Laics in Religion*, along with the very useful notes of Father Charles Vanni, Superior of one of our houses in Rome. This work is an abstract of the spiritual exhortations which he had given to lay-brothers from time to time.

May my little book be of some use to your souls, and may the practical knowledge of what I am going to tell you tend to the glory of God, who in spite of our unworthiness has called us to His service in the Society.

For this purpose I shall combine with these lessons some of those examples of virtue and religious perfection which so many holy lay-brothers have left behind them. These, as well as other useful matter, I have drawn from the *Menology* of the Society, from the two volumes of *The Praises of Lay-brothers*, published in Mexico, and finally from two manuscript works belonging to the Province of Andalusia.

I have been long anxious to write this book, but God has not given me the opportunity till now. Perhaps in His providence He wished that you should receive it at a time of dispersion, exile, and painful trials, the end of which He alone can foresee.

May God in His infinite mercy grant that when the time of our return to the sacred inclosure of our religious houses shall have come, you will be glad to remember that THE PERFECT LAY-BROTHER was your faithful friend, and a constant motive for loving and esteeming more and more your holy vocation, even in the midst of that worldly atmosphere in which for the present you are forced to live. And may this friend aid you to obtain one day heaven itself, and make you worthy to be associated with those lay-brothers whom the Church has beatified, and of whom some notice will be found at the end of this book.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR	v
INTRODUCTION	vii

FIRST PART.

*The excellence, advantages, and happiness attending those offices
which belong to the degree of lay-brother.*

Chapter I.—The excellence of the offices of Martha .	1
„ II.—The immense advantage of these offices .	12
„ III.—Happiness of the life of lay-brother .	27

SECOND PART.

*On the obligation under which our brothers lie of corresponding to
the goodness of God in giving them so blessed a vocation.*

Chapter I.—On the love of work	41
„ II.—On Prayer	57
„ III.—On Confession and Communion	79
First Article—Confession	79
Second Article—Communion	92

THIRD PART.

On the offices of lay-brothers.

	<i>Page</i>
1.—The Sacristan	108
2.—The Porter	116
3.—The Infirmarian	126
4.—The Purveyor	136
5.—The Dispenser	144
6.—The Cook	150
7.—The Refectorian	159
8.—The Linen-keeper	164
9.—The Subminister	171
10.—The Baker	175
11.—The Shoemaker	178
12.—The Gardener	182
13.—The Carpenter, Locksmith, Mason, &c.	186

FOURTH PART.

On religious politeness.

Chapter I.—Introduction	190
„ II.—General Rules	194
„ III.—On familiarity	199
„ IV.—On joking	210
„ V.—On exterior behaviour	216
„ VI.—On meals and recreations	241
Conclusion	257

FIFTH PART.

Abridgement of the Life of Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez.

§ 1.—His birth, and life in the world	260
§ 2.—His entrance into Religion	264

CONTENTS.

xv

	<i>Page</i>
§ 3.—His novitiate	266
§ 4.—His vows, and his offices	268
§ 5.—His fidelity to his vows	269
§ 6.—His mortification, his patience, his humility	283
§ 7.—His love of God, and of his neighbour	290
§ 8.—His love toward the Blessed Virgin	298
§ 9.—His last sickness, and holy death	305

Appendix I.—The friendship between Blessed Alphonsus and Blessed Peter Claver	311
Lessons or maxims of Blessed Alphonsus	
Appendix II.—Catalogue of lay-brothers beatified and canonized	317 324



THE PERFECT LAY-BROTHER.

FIRST PART.

The excellence, advantage, and happiness attending those offices which belong to the degree of Lay-Brother.

CHAPTER I.

PROOF OF THE EXCELLENCE OF THE WORKS PECULIAR TO THE LIFE OF MARTHA IN RELIGIOUS HOUSES.

As in order to form a just idea of the cost and value of any statue, picture, or precious stone, we must have recourse to those who are skilled in such matters, and consult a sculptor, painter, or jeweller; so to form a sound judgment on the excellence of the state and vocation of religious who consecrate themselves to the service of God, and who have made choice for their whole life of the duties of Martha, we cannot do better than ask those of most experience, that is to say, the Saints, who, being enlightened by the rays of divine wisdom, have had for their guide the light of Heaven itself.

Their words, their examples above all, will teach us everything we can desire to know on this point. Now, the annals of the Church and the lives of the servants of God are filled with such examples. St. Bandry, Bishop of Soissons, St. Paulinus of Nola, St. Maurillus of Angers, and many others, left their sees and laid aside their mitres, to devote themselves to the humble occupation of gardener in the monastery, wherein they lived poor and unknown. St. Antony of Padua, so celebrated for his learning that Gregory IX. called him the "Ark of the Testament," and who was the first professor of theology in the Order of St. Francis, was desirous for a long time of remaining a simple lay-brother. And though it was discovered that he was a very mine of learning, he begged his Superiors with so great earnestness to let him remain, for the love of God, in these humble offices, that, when laying the highest duties upon him, they consoled him by the permission to retain somewhat of the life of Martha in the fulfilment, from time to time, of the humblest duties of the religious life. Father Rodolphus Aquaviva, son of the Duke of Atri, and Father Gaspard Barzee, the one a glorious martyr, the other an apostle of the Indies, as we read in the annals of the Society, prayed often, even with tears, to be received into the rank of lay-brother. In the life of St. Colette, who reformed the Order of St. Clare, we are told that she also at the feet of the Holy Father begged the favour of living and dying as a lay-sister, and of serving in that capacity those who had been clothed

with the habit of her Order. Her petition, however, was not granted, for the Pontiff, touched with a sense of her profound humility, only loaded her with praises, and made her take the charge of Superior.

Among the crowd of Saints who preferred the lowly rank of brother to all the distinctions of high birth, we will cite but a few. St. Anastasius, brother of a great general, rejoiced to serve in religion as cook and gardener. Brother Lifard, though of noble blood, and belonging to an illustrious family, was glad to fill the office of swineherd. William II., Duke of Guienne, made it his pride and joy to labour day and night baking bread for the community. And the noble Prince Carloman, who had so often defeated his enemies and obtained such prosperity for the Church, chose to end his days at Monte Cassino, working in the kitchen for the gardener and the brother in charge of the cattle. Bathilde, Queen of France, after retiring within a convent, not only cherished the religious as though her own daughters, but also found infinite pleasure in rendering them the most menial services.

We could say the same of St. Hedwige, Duchess of Poland, of St. Radegonde, Queen of France, of the Empress Cunegonde, and many others. Charles, King of Germany, quitted the world, and entering religion as a lay-brother, delighted in herding the cattle of the monastery. Especially admirable is the example of councillor Peter [Spinola, as the inscription on his tomb in the city of Geneva testifies: "Beneath this lies John Peter Spinola, who,

called by Providence to the possession of a large fortune, yet full of grief that he was not allowed to enter the Society of Jesus, begged as a very signal favour at the hour of his death, that he might be buried amongst the lay-brothers of the Society. May those who read these lines learn to value, in a life which passes so rapidly, that only which deserves to be valued at the hour of death. Pray for him." Nor must we omit from our list Father James of Eguia, confessor of St. Ignatius, who begged of his Superior and penitent permission to wait on Father Antonio Araoz, or any other Father of the Society, in the capacity of lay-brother, well knowing that such an office would make him pleasing to God.

But as a great many Saints have preferred an humble, and apparently abject position, to the fame of their crown, their throne, their sceptre, and their purple; many others have preferred it to that glory which their wonderful talents and learning would most certainly have obtained for them in the world. Very striking amongst such examples is that of Father Laynez, one of the first Fathers of the Society, and its General after St. Ignatius, who, notwithstanding his reputation of being one of the most learned men of his own, or, perhaps, of any day, at the very time that he was Provincial of Italy, and had just stood out as the light and oracle of the Council of Trent, wrote to our holy Founder, in the strongest and most pressing terms, for the particular favour of being set apart during the rest of his life simply to fill the office of lay-

brother. We read, in the chronicles of the Cistercian Order, of another memorable instance—Father Alan, a man of such erudition that he was called the Universal Father of the Church. One day there appeared to him, as is also related of St. Augustine, a little child, who told him that it would be easier to gather together all the waters of the Seine into a very small hole, than to understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity, on which he was then meditating. Filled with surprise and confusion by these words, he at once quitted the world, clothed himself in poor attire, and went to knock humbly at the gate of the monastery, begging to be admitted as a lay-brother. His request was granted, and he was sent to herd the goats belonging to the convent. While in this office he was ordered to accompany the Abbot to Rome, and take charge of whatever had to be carried with them. He obeyed at once with joy and humility. When they arrived at the holy city, the Lateran Council was being held, and one day his Superior took him with him to be present at the sitting of the Council. On that very day, a chief promoter of heresy brought forward a serious difficulty, which so much embarrassed all the Fathers of the Council that they seemed not to know what to say or think. At that moment Alan, directed by the Holy Spirit, asked permission to answer the objection, and having obtained leave, he spoke to the point with such force and learning as soon disclosed the falseness of the line of argument. The proposer of the difficulty, glancing quickly at him, cried out, “Thou art either Alan, or the devil.” The other,

with all simplicity, replied, "Yes, I am Alan," and immediately the fame of the event was spread throughout the whole city. The Holy Father wished to reward his great merit, but the humble religious generously renounced every offer, preferring before all ecclesiastical dignities and honours the happiness of remaining a poor religious, and so continued to prefer, to the very end of his life, the humble duties of Martha. How many others could I quote, members of the Society itself, who, when dedicating themselves to God, have chosen rather the humble rank of lay-brother, whatever may have been their past attainments in science and learning, and who, to the very close of their lives, have never felt the least regret at the choice they had made. The express wish of Father Provincial, together with all the efforts of the Franciscans, who would fain have admitted him as a Priest into their Order, could never prevent the young Louis de Moralès from praying to become one of our lay-brothers, even though he had so distinguished himself in his studies, and, from his earliest childhood, had drawn to himself the sympathies of every one by his wonderful progress. He always maintained his preference for this more humble state, and when any one fell into the mistake of addressing him by the title of Father, supposing from the dignity of his bearing, the superiority of his education, and the refinement of his appearance, that he was a Priest, he instantly undeceived him by saying, with great humility, "I am but a poor, simple lay-brother of the Society."

We have another example of equal humility, and

one which should greatly encourage us in urging our brothers to a very high esteem of their holy vocation, in the life of good Brother Simon Andrés, born in Galicia, who consecrated himself to God in the province of Andalusia, and made his noviceship at Seville. He might have aspired to the priesthood, being well versed in Latin, for he had even taught the language to others, and had with great success passed through his course of philosophy, but he made choice of the grade of lay-brother, not from indecision of character, lightness, or caprice, but after the most serious reflection. And of this he gave ample proof, for, after being restored to full liberty on the suppression of the Society, instead of entering into Orders, as did many lay-brothers less well instructed than himself, he positively refused to do so, and throughout the remainder of his life gave not the slightest indication that he knew a word of Latin, a point sufficiently difficult to carry out. We read of the same thing in the case of Brother Antony Lalanne of the same province, lay-brother by his own desire, and so simple in his life, that not a doubt crossed the mind of any one that he knew no language but his own Spanish; though, amongst other acquirements, he could converse in four different languages.

Now, if the singular esteem in which the truly wise, that is, the Saints, have ever held the precious treasure of this vocation, already possesses such weight in leading us to appreciate and esteem it ourselves, in spite of the various false opinions and the spirit of pride so common in the world, we shall without doubt be much more deeply impressed,

when we see that the Saint of Saints, our Divine Master, our God, has on every occasion manifested His predilection for this lowly state which He has blessed with the most signal favours.

Biographies are full of the record of singular graces bestowed by God, along with very particular marks of His love for souls so especially forgetful of the world, for whom He has reserved the most precious gifts of Heaven. Among these were the ecstasies and spiritual delights granted to Joachim of Levanto, James Allemandi, John and Andrew of Catania; and the gift of prophecy accorded to Brother Simon, son of the Duke of Guildres, after he had, in the spirit of profound humility and tender love of God, renounced everything, and embraced the Cross in the religious state; such, in fine, the favours poured out on Brother Alphonsus Rodriguez, a marvel of humility and holiness in our Society.

The gift of miracles seems to have been the general reward of souls consecrated to God in this humble vocation and degree of voluntary subjection. One may say, that the more they desired to abase themselves through love of Him, the more did it please God to exalt them. Thus, when Joseph of Corleone, lay-brother in the Order of Brothers Minor, a true saint, began one day to pray, in that instant a whole prairie, sterile and parched up, was covered with verdure, and appeared studded over with beautiful flowers, yielding the most exquisite perfumes. Another religious of the same Order, and simple lay-brother, named Oblat, spread out his cloak over the waves of the sea,

and it became to him as a strong boat, able to carry him on a long voyage. Peculiarly touching were those little marks of tenderness with which our Lord loved to favour His servant, Blessed Veronica, a lay-sister of great sanctity, whether in sending to her bread of a dazzling whiteness, or by delighting her with the visit of glorified souls. It would take us too long to narrate all the supernatural graces which our tender Mother, the most holy Mary, has obtained for humble lay-brothers, either to console them or to refresh them in their labours. Amongst others Blessed Felix, a Capuchin, obtained the wonderful favour of receiving from the hands of Mary, and of carrying in his arms, her Beloved Son, the little Infant Jesus. In proof also of the especial love of Jesus for those who serve Him in the humble ministrations of Martha, we have all those familiar communications, interior manifestations, heavenly caresses, with which He strengthens and rewards those who with violence to themselves have learned to imitate His humility, and seek to please Him by their love for a life of labour. As He did to Blessed Francis Salvador de Horta, to St. James of Alcala, and many others, showing towards them such an excess of condescension as to stretch out His arms from the Crucifix to embrace them, and to press them gently to His Heart, all on fire with love, as happened to the humble and poor Brother Francis Dujardin.

The Society is rich in examples of this predilection of the Saviour for our own lay-brothers. In the

first place, Brothers James Kisai, Dominic Colin, Manuel Neri, besides others, have received the highest grace of shedding their blood for Jesus Christ. Others, again, have devoted themselves to the service of those stricken with the plague, as did the holy Brother Bernard of Biscay, placed as cook by St. Francis Borgia in the College of Simanca, in order to sanctify that house by the example of his virtues.

Many, like Brother John Jimeno, in the province of Aragon, were enriched with extraordinary and miraculous gifts in recompense for their profound humility, or were covered with favours not less marvellous, as was our dear Brother Francis Hortolan (in the process of whose beatification informations have already been commenced). That he might be admitted as a lay-brother, he was obliged to give up his studies, and more than once he had the blessing of receiving the Bread of Heaven from the hand of angels, in presence of the most holy Virgin Mary and of the blessed Martyr, Antiochus. In connection with the abandonment of study for the sake of becoming a lay-brother, stands out the example of our holy Brother Alphonsus Rodriguez, who, before he entered the Society, had studied letters and had completed his course in rhetoric. Blessed Peter Claver would also have stopped at the end of his theological course, had his Superiors yielded to his pressing solicitations to be admitted in the same degree, the humble duties of which he often performed for several years in the New World. We

are well acquainted with the singular graces and favours heaped on these two holy souls.

If, then, such great Saints have manifested a high esteem of the degree of lay-brothers in religion, if so many illustrious persons have preferred it to the advantages and distinctions of the world, to nobility of rank, and to learning; if Heaven itself has borne testimony to the wisdom of these Saints by crowning them with its most precious gifts and graces, it surely cannot be denied that this state of life contains a treasure of the highest value, a degree of singular merit, though it is neither appreciated by, nor is it indeed known to those proud spirits of the world, who are entirely blinded to all that is supernatural or divine; while, on the contrary, those pure hearts, which are filled with the light of God, appreciate it at its true value, and seek its blessings with earnest desire.

But if, to finish our present subject, we ask yet stronger proof of the truth of all we have been saying, we find it in a few brief words of the holy Gospel concerning the God-Man—"And He was subject to them."* What does this obedience mean? Beyond doubt, replies St. Basil, Jesus in this state of life so humble, ceased not to work with Mary and Joseph in the manual labours of that little house of Nazareth, and at the trade of a carpenter. "He was a carpenter, therefore His occupation was lowly." Nor could words express a stronger argument for the excellence of the degree of lay-brother.

* St. Luke ii. 51.

CHAPTER II.

THE IMMENSE BLESSINGS AND ADVANTAGES BELONGING TO THE STATE OF RELIGIOUS ENGAGED IN THE OFFICES OF MARTHA.

OUR will, created to love what is good, could not fail of being drawn and attached to an object which has been shown to be so excellent; but if, besides the excellence of the object in itself, reason proves that it possesses very special advantages, then the will feels itself doubly attracted to it as by the force of a loadstone, that it may draw yet closer together the bonds by which it is held.

When describing in detail the advantages promised in religion to the state and office of Martha, I will prove them to be so great that he, who has received the grace from Heaven to know and appreciate them, can never cease to pour forth his gratitude to God for having in His mercy, without any merit of his, conferred so great a favour on him; nor can he ever fail to renew his vows with fervour and enthusiasm, loving with every affection of his heart Him who has called him to this humble vocation, and resolved to glorify Him by every sacrifice in his power, and by the constant practice of all the virtues proper to his state.

Let no one imagine that these advantages are but accidental to this state. No, they are lasting, and they are essentially the property of this special voca-

tion, and should always, more or less directly, but at the same time effectually contribute to the sanctification and eternal salvation of souls. It is this point which we are about to explain without the slightest exaggeration, after the manner of artists who bring out the richness of their colouring by arresting the eye with strong contrasts, and placing the brightest colours by the side of the deepest shadows. Like these we shall describe, on the one hand, the thousand dangers to which Priests in religion are exposed, and, on the other, the peace and security which those who are not Priests, and are not called to be Priests, enjoy as the natural consequence of the state which they have chosen. But how great the contrast! How great the difference!

A well known comparison represents to us this world as an immense sea, in the midst of which we are all making sail towards eternity, enveloped indeed by furious storms, yet under very different circumstances. Some are embarked in worn-out vessels, rotting away, and threatening each instant to founder: thus is it with the men of the world, who live amid the cares and trammels of this life. Others are sailing in large ships, sound and well built, perfectly provisioned with every necessity for the voyage; but they are followed by bad weather during the whole passage, they are incessantly attacked by storms and sudden squalls, and are in momentary dread of being dashed against the rocks. These are the religious who consecrate themselves to God in the priesthood and apostolic

ministry. But besides these are some who have the opportunity of making the voyage with greater ease and security, without even exposing themselves to the inconstant sea, or risking themselves in these miserable houses of wood. They must, however, be content to pass along bridges, which, to say the least, are especially magnificent and of great size ; these are the people who have entered religion to serve God in the office of Martha, and to be a help to Priests by freeing them from the weight and embarrassment of looking after temporal matters. Now, to perceive the justness of this comparison, it will be enough to cast a passing glance at the difficulties and dangers besetting Priests, and at the tranquillity and security of lay-brothers.

What, can there be any who blind their eyes to the difficulties and perils to which Priests are always liable ! Are they not continually occupied in hearing confessions, and in this duty is there not danger—danger, too, of a very grave kind ? We do not say much of the extreme fatigue which this important ministry causes, far greater than those imagine who have not experienced it, for their body is often worn out, their head suffers, their heart is filled with anxiety. Nay, frequently their health fails, or their very life is in danger ; and, though they have some consolations, how many sufferings and disappointments have they not to endure in silence ? Without a strong conviction of the fear of God, without a zeal singularly pure for the salvation of souls, let us not deceive ourselves, the ministry of the confessional is full of dangers. If a man were to try and steady

himself on a slippery and shifting mound, that he might stretch out his hand to rescue some poor drowning comrade as he struggles in the water, it would be no difficult matter to foresee that he will probably be dragged down and perish along with his friend. We apply this comparison to the priesthood, and with truth, for otherwise history would not have had so often to deplore the fall of many apostolic men, who, to use another comparison, simple but none the less true, are like brooms and brushes used in cleaning our rooms and furniture, which are much used indeed, but are always full of dirt and dust. Had there been no danger in the duties of a Priest, then the Holy Church, our good mother, would have had no occasion to publish, through her Pontiffs, so many decrees, or so many canonical penalties, to prevent or else remove an evil inherent in our feeble nature since the Fall, which left man capable of abusing everything, however holy it be, and of converting the best of remedies into deadly poison. Thanks to the divine mercy these cases are rare, but no one can deny the gravity of the danger.

And you, my dear brother, I have but to tell you that you are wholly preserved from these perils, because, called as you are to the life of Martha, you enter the confessional, only to receive, and never to dispense this remedy of infinite value through the Divine Blood. You go thither as sick men, and not as the physician; as disciples and children, not as teachers and fathers. You approach it, seeking a guide and support for your voyage and

passage to eternal life, and not in quality of guides, whose office it is to conduct others to this blessed end. If you have but a little faith, and if the thought of the judgments of God, which are an unfathomable abyss, can produce any impression on you, then you will have occasion to bless and praise Him a thousand times for having placed you in so tranquil a condition of life, and given you a vocation of such security, and you will beg of Him to preserve you in it till you die.

And your thankfulness should be all the more sincere and heartfelt because, independently of the advantage of such great security, you have, besides, the blessedness of participating in all the benefits that the Society can produce in souls through the labour of her Priests. Yes, you are truly her coadjutors, and not mere servants or domestics, and when you can render any service to Priests in temporal matters, it is in order to assist them and place at their disposal more time to give to their holy ministrations, and consequently you afford them the means of working and fighting the battle while you guard the baggage. You share also in all their merit and in the greatest achievements of the Society, as our holy Father and Founder has expressly asserted in the sixth chapter of the Examen, adding that you have equal right to the indulgences and other spiritual privileges which the Holy See has accorded to all who work in the Society. But this is not the only motive for rejoicing that you are lay-brothers, rejecting at the same time every temptation to discontent in so happy a

vocation. I have other dangers to recount to which Priests are exposed.

They are indeed obliged to give themselves much to study, for very great exertion is necessary in order to attain the highest summits of the steep ascent of science ; and you observe how, after long labour, some become famous preachers, others able professors, while a few distinguish themselves as authors of great reputation. But who could tell all the dangers of the professional chair, the perils incurred by those who teach, or who wield the pen? Those alone who, having reached the highest point of this lofty mountain, find themselves breathing an air so pure that it soon makes respiration difficult, or who are assailed by the violence of fierce winds, those alone know the danger of mounting so high unless they make use of every precaution necessary to keep respiration free, and can guard against the giddiness coming on their senses, or stand their ground when assailed by storms. Consult experienced men, and they will tell you whether they have not every need of help from God, clinging with all their strength to the spirit of their religion and their faith, and never failing to pray for grace to resist the impetuous winds of vanity, of ambition, of pride ; for in this way only can they preserve themselves from that fatal loss of their senses which shows itself in a profound conviction of their own individual merit, and a mad desire to depend on none but themselves. They will tell you of the efforts they are obliged to make in order to save themselves from

a certain fastidiousness and over-sensibility, and quench in the bud a tendency, very difficult to repress, which leads men to criticise and condemn, and act in constant opposition to those dictates of religious simplicity which fill us with a sense of our own nothingness, according to the counsels and commands of Jesus Christ, and the recommendations of His Apostles. It is, indeed, conformity to this rule which is the surest test for recognizing a perfect, amongst a thousand imperfect, religious.

I do not mean to say that science or knowledge of itself causes all these evils, for then it could not be that precious gift which Solomon preferred to all the goods of the earth, and even to his own throne; it could no longer be the light of the world, the key to the treasures of God and the source of our love towards Him, the only solid and true good of man; it could no longer serve as the glorious pedestal which has truly raised the Saints to their perfection, for the greater number of them would not have been Saints but in the right use of their knowledge. But this I will say that, in the same way that liberty is the cause of an infinitude of disorders in the world, not in herself, it is true, but through her abuse; so knowledge is the source of infinite evils both to individuals and to society, as the occasion, I mean, of their existence, by reason of the bad use often made of the possession of knowledge.

Liberty, not restrained by obedience, is like a horse which has seized the bit between its teeth. Know-

ledge without humility is as a ship without sails, ballast, or rudder, the sport of the winds and a prey to all the horrors of the deep. There is scarcely a single page in history which does not record one or other of these sad examples, from Origen and Tertullian down to the very last of the heretics ; and amongst them were many who left their convents and who were Priests, while most of them had to deplore the abuse of their knowledge. Alas, neglecting the warning of the Holy Spirit, they filled their minds with more than they ought to have learnt, and they were lost ! For, as St. Basil says, in the same way that food ill digested generates bad humours, and, instead of strengthening the health, weakens and destroys it ; so too much cannot but overcharge the stomach of the soul, which is the memory. Our mental nourishment must first be acted upon by the fire of the charity of Jesus Christ, then, after being well digested, it will give life and force to the powers and faculties of the soul, as can be often traced in its actions and habits ; whilst, on the contrary, dangerous knowledge is always busily engaged in laying the foundations of a bad life. Ah ! cries out the same Doctor of the Church, it were far better to place God in our hearts than the whole range of human science, and the pious author of the *Imitation of Jesus Christ* repeats the same more than once.

Thus, my dear brothers, knowledge is a great good, it is true ; but it is at the same time a great danger, and you should thank God that you do not aspire after great knowledge, and, still more, that you

ought not to do so, since this leaves you so much at ease and so much surer of your salvation. Nay, should a temptation to envy assail you when observing the Fathers or Scholastics, a regret at having so little learning, a desire to be learned, or to appear to be so (which were as ridiculous as it would be wrong), be sure you study with affection our holy rules, especially the fourteenth of the Common Rules, and the first, ninth, tenth, and eleventh of the Rules of Coadjutors, and beseech God not to let you have wings, but to free you from the temptation or desire to have them, and to purify your eyes that you may see, as clearly as others have done, that, if in one way you have less knowledge, you have that which immensely compensates, namely, security; seeing that you are rescued from a thousand dangers to your salvation, though it be that not one single person in the world gives to you the title of Father, Master, Professor, or Preacher. Such was the lot and good fortune of that poor lay-brother, whose soul St. Teresa saw entering Heaven full of glory and casting bright rays of light toward earth, while the Holy Sacrifice was being offered up for his repose.

It is this light, above all the science in the world, that you must acquire, and which I assure you can be obtained neither so easily nor so securely in study, in the chair of the professor, nor in even drawing tears from an audience. If only amongst you there was no other desire than to know how to love God *in the simplicity of your heart*, no other desire than to acquire, by practice, those virtues

which would form in you the special character and feature of your religious state, those virtues that constitute the true science and even wisdom of man, how content would our holy father St. Ignatius be with you, how happy the Society in having such children. You will observe that these are the virtues mentioned in the second of your rules. Never forget the saying of St. John Chrysostom: Humility is the mother, the root, the foundation of all virtues, and it is she also who preserves them. On the contrary, said the same holy Doctor, pride feeds itself on all the praises and the renown following upon the labours of the preacher, the professor, and the other offices in which our talents and our qualities shine forth, and this passion of ambition gains fresh heat from the esteem and distinction heaped on us by the world. Devote yourselves, then, to practise virtue with the humility proper to your state, and be well assured that, as St. Basil tells us, this is the only virtue which contains all the others within it, and that it is the source of every blessing.

Such are the treasures which your father St. Ignatius wished you to possess, when in the fourteenth of the Common Rules he prohibited you from the study of letters, or from being instructed in them by others, assuring you that it ought to be quite enough for you to serve God our Lord in the simplicity and humility of your heart, in other words, in this grade of subjection desiring only to attain the love of God. Nor did he wish for you any other care or anxiety than to please God, without much question or argument, with regard either to your own salvation

or your exterior duties towards your neighbour, having, in fine, but this one end, the submission and obedience which form precisely the character of that simplicity proposed to the religious soul by St. Francis of Sales in his twelfth treatise, where he gives it for model the dove and also little children, after the pattern of Jesus in the Gospel.

It may perchance cost you somewhat before you can make up your mind to regard as an inestimable treasure a state of humility and simplicity, especially were the day to come in which the words of Job* could be applied to any of you: "The simplicity of the just man shall be laughed to scorn." For you may be counted as actual fools and imbeciles when you are found to be deficient in experience and sharpness, or, in a word, craftiness; that prolific source of countless artifices, deceits, lies, and rogueries, according to the testimony of the same Saint in the passage quoted. But bear in mind also the words that follow in the text of Job, and apply them to yourselves with humility, reflecting that by the grace of God you are as a lamp despised indeed in the thoughts of those who imagine themselves rich in knowledge, but destined in due time to shed abroad rays of pure and brilliant light. It is well said, exclaimed St. Gregory, when interpreting this passage, a lamp despised—a lamp because it shines within, and despised because it shines not without. That soul then shines and is despised which burns interiorly with the fire of all virtues, and she is despised in comparison with those who

* Job. xii.

have more knowledge and more fame. Within burns and sparkles the flame of charity, but men see not that flame, they despise it. Yet, what matter! If it is destined to be one day placed on a candlestick to shine there for ever, and if those who once despised it and who are shining to-day, shall then be in darkness. The whole passage is quoted from St. Gregory by Father Jerome Platus in his treatise on the excellence of the religious state.

You will mark, my dear brothers, all this is a matter of faith, enkindle it therefore and esteem it in your hearts, grow more and more each day in the love of the wonderful grace of a vocation that renders so easy for you the fulfilment of the divine promises. Were I not afraid to make this chapter too long, I would say much about another considerable danger which menaces Priests, but from which your state as lay-brothers is entirely free. Thus, how great the comfort for you that you can never be made Superiors, that you will not be called upon to render account to God for the many souls which might have been committed to your care, in addition to the care of your own soul. What happiness to escape all those embarrassments and anxieties that are so constantly springing up in every community of men, like evil weeds in every ground however well cultivated, even in that of better quality. Know you not in the midst of what tears and entreaties a great many servants of God are obliged to lighten their shoulders of the heavy cross of exercising authority over others, or in truth to free them from it altogether? Have you never heard how St. John of the Cross supplicated

our Lord with the greatest fervour not to suffer him to be driven to death in the exercise of his office as Superior. And what did all this mean except the fear of not knowing how to profit by the thousand occasions in the exercise of his charge for sanctifying himself, and the still greater dread of the terrible judgments reserved by God for those upon whom is laid the duty of governing and directing others.

Of a surety, you are placed beyond all these perils, you, my dear brothers, who have entered an Order of Clerks Regular of which the Superiors are Priests. And if you are put in charge of any particular work, even though you be placed at the head of any office in the house, you have always one or more Priests as Superiors to whom you can in each thing have recourse, and upon whom you depend for even the less important things, in consequence of which you are sure always to do right in obeying. And though it may often be that you are discharged from all responsibility, what happiness, what consolation, both in life and in death.

To conclude, since there are so many advantages in the condition of those devoted to the service of God in humble and exterior offices without desiring to mount higher, we may feel certain that the Saints, who have held it in preference and who have for it gone the length of refusing the priesthood, have been very far from deceiving themselves.

The example of St. Francis of Assisi on this point is one of the most admirable, and must be known to all. He was Founder, Father, and Superior of an Order of especial celebrity in the Church, yet he never

could be persuaded to become a Priest; and if we are to believe that which is told us in his life, he continued firm to this resolution and this sentiment of humility, because he knew well that God requires a perfect purity in the souls of His Priests. This he was made to understand one day in a marvellous vision. An angel appeared to him holding in his hand a crystal vase of extraordinary purity and transparency, filled with limpid water, while he told him on the part and in the name of God: It is thus that I desire that soul to be, which serves and glorifies Me every day at the holy altar.

St. Francis of Paul, though urged for a long time with every possible argument, stood firmly to his ground, and to the last refused the honour of priesthood.

Nilammon obtained the favour from God that he should die suddenly rather than be consecrated Bishop, and it was only by force that he was ordained Priest and obliged to hear confessions.

We know how the holy apostle of France, St. Francis Regis, resisted for long, with extraordinary interior suffering, urged forward as he was on the one hand by his desire to save souls in the ministry of the priesthood, yet held back on the other by the fear and terror inspired by this title and honour, so that obedience alone could restore peace to him, nor was he ordained except at the formal command of his Superiors.

And that illustrious man, Melchior Carneiro, who on account of his sanctity and marvellous learning was named by the Sovereign Pontiff to be Bishop of

Ethiopia, with what tears and prayers did he seek to gain over the heart of Father Simon Rodriguez, that he might be permitted to enter the Society as a lay-brother. And yet he could not attain the object of his desires, because his Superiors decided that the general good of souls ought to be placed before the private good and happiness of this holy man.

Many more examples of the same kind could I quote from the annals of our holy Society, but these will suffice to eradicate from your hearts, if it had ever been planted there, the very root itself of this temptation, which leads you to desire to glorify God in a higher grade, and to work for the salvation of souls. Would not Lancius ask you : Do you not know that in the Society the brother Sacristan and the brother Porter also save souls? And whatever may be your office, whether it be to wash or wipe the plates and pots, our brothers can save a great many souls. Are you not aware that you are members of the same body, and belong to an Order the object of which is to do good to souls, and that consequently everything which is done, every labour however mean and humble it may appear, absolutely everything tends to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And were this not so, as the Father adds, the first in the whole Society to complain would be the Superiors themselves, since for the most part they have little time to devote either to preaching, teaching, or hearing confessions, or in a word labour directly for the benefit of souls, and yet if they but fulfil well the duties of their charge, they do more than all the rest. Thus the general of an army

does more than the soldiers, even when with weapon in hand they fight and risk their lives for their country. Do not be surprised then that I have dwelt so long on this point, it is one far more important for you than at first appears.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE HAPPINESS AND INTERNAL PEACE TO BE FOUND IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE, AND OF THE SPECIAL SHARE WHICH LAY-BROTHERS ENJOY IN THEM.

It is generally admitted that the earthly paradise, designed in the paternal providence of God to be the magnificent palace of the first man, so long as this king of the creation merited by his innocence to rule over nature, is a lively image of the religious vocation—true paradise of the earth, since the fall and dispersion of the human race.

Four streams fertilized and adorned this beautiful garden, making it a lovely and delicious abode. Now there are four streams irrigating the plants that have taken root in the paradise of religion, and strengthening them to bring forth rich flowers and fruit unto eternal life.

The first source of blessing and consolation is prayer, of which our Saviour Himself speaks by His Prophet Isaias: I will conduct the soul to my holy mountain, and I will fill her with consolations in my house of prayer. It was when treating of this source

of blessing that St. Macarius remarked : The servants of God in His holy house are ever feasting and rejoicing, these are His unspeakable delights.

The second cause of happiness to us is in voluntary poverty. With this it is impossible but that religious should be full of comfort, since having left everything for God they may claim the hundred-fold even in this life, and may taste the sweetest peace in seeing themselves delivered from the perpetual cares and distractions that invade the hearts of worldly men preoccupied with the affairs of this life. When some persons remarked to Father Reginald, companion of S. Dominic de Guzman, that they could not comprehend how he lived so poorly in the midst too of austerities and privations, more especially as he belonged to a wealthy family and had been brought up in abundance and luxury, he at once replied : Be assured that this exterior penance and mortification, which strikes your eye, is something so delicate and delicious to my soul, and fills my heart with so excessive a sweetness, as to keep me in constant fear lest I am still too weak, and am wholly wanting in merit before God.

The third source of comfort that inundates the soul with consolations is chastity. The power of this angelical virtue to give peace and happiness to the soul is so great that the very pagans have acknowledged it. Cato, according to the testimony of Plutarch, has said that if men knew how to cultivate this fair lily, to preserve its perfume and its pure whiteness, they would enjoy perfect and unchanging happiness, and would attain the felicity of the gods. The truth

of this is beyond doubt, for if health of mind and body is necessary for preserving the just balance of our powers and faculties, and securing to us a calm self-possession, then since it is certain that chastity promotes the health both of one and the other, she will also be enabled to maintain our spirit in a calm and healthy state to which the mere animal man is an utter stranger, but which is the immediate recompense of those who have sacrificed to God without reserve all the affections of their heart and all the pleasures of sense. Oh! happy is the pure soul! From how many anxieties, troubles, and sufferings is she not set free? She alone can say with the royal David: My heart and my flesh have leapt for joy in the living God.

The fourth and last source of happiness in this paradise of religion is obedience, of which we say everything by declaring that she, in a manner, places us by anticipation in the state of beatitude.. For, as the bliss of the Saints in Heaven consists in being perfectly free, and in never failing to accomplish perfectly in every respect the Divine Will, he who is truly obedient can say that he is already blessed even in this life, since he is certain of always doing what God wills, in great things as in less, and can never deceive himself if he performs faithfully what those command him, whom his Sovereign Master has placed in charge over him.

But let us advance a step further in the matter and affirm, without fear of self-deception, that these four streams of blessing and consolation which bear such peace and joy to all religious, to those also who are

elevated to the priesthood, should pour them forth in still richer abundance upon those whom the Lord has deigned to call to a more humble vocation, for of them can be especially used the words of the Prophet concerning the Saints in Heaven: The Lord hath bathed them in the torrents of His delights. The first source of blessedness which we have to prove is prayer.

Our Saviour loves to converse with the simple of heart, and hides from the learned and proud those mysteries which He is pleased to reveal to the meek and unlearned, as He has Himself told us. In prayer then, which is a kind of discourse with God, He will reserve for them His brightest lights and especial marks of tenderness, in preference to the wise and learned.

This is a general rule knowing no exception, for were there but one such found, it would be granted in favour of learned persons who made their prayer not as learned but as simple souls, laying all their science on one side and shaking off, as much as possible, the habits of subtle reasoning and study in the fields of philosophy and literature. This effort must cost them serious trouble, and yet if it succeeds not, their prayer can only be a vain and profitless speculation, wholly without the consolation of heavenly care; nay, what is sadder still, they can have no fruit, because neither will nor heart bears much, if any, part in them, nor, as you may add, does any great practice of religious virtue prepare the heart for them.

Now, without all this effort, but with the simple directing of a right intention in humility and simplicity,

souls untaught in human science, as our lay-brothers are, taste in abundance the milk of heavenly consolations within the bosom of our Lord, while the gentlest movements of their hearts incline them to the constant practice of the most beautiful virtues, this being the object of all meditation. It is thus that they learn by experience the truth of what is said in books, that discourse or conversation with God does by no means cause weariness or depression of spirits. If then, my dear brothers, you are innocent and humble, you can drink at this first source of comfort, of which the refreshing streams flow for you as well as for the learned, and that which St. Basil expressed so well will be verified in you, that as your active life is particularly devoted to exterior occupations, which, when pursued within proper limits, can neither impede nor injure the faculties of the soul as mental labour does, so it will be easy for you to acquire perfectly the habit of living in the presence of God by the exercises of the contemplative life and by prayer, as did the pious hermits of the desert. For they had two wings with which to rise towards God and fly to Heaven, prayer and work ; and you also have two wings as the learned Suarez well knew when he said, in the passage cited above, that your life is like to the life of the hermit Saints.

Poverty, the second source of blessing, secures to you in proportion even greater consolations. For if we start with this principle that in religion the poorest and the most ready to sacrifice his wealth is the richest and the most blessed, then it is impossible for a lay-brother to fail of being this, since as regards clothing

or lodging, whether at home in our own homes or abroad, they are necessarily less well provided for than those who study, or who are occupied in the various ministries of the Society.

It is difficult for any one to keep his heart detached from the things which he regards as necessary, and he is exposed to a crowd of delusions to which habit gives birth. Self-love suggests with cleverness, and without our perceiving it, a thousand pretexts for believing that the care which we should take of our health for the sake of prudence, or of the good of souls, or of the glory of God, requires us to attend to these matters, whilst in reality there is in our hearts a secret attachment to that which gives us pleasure, or even the beginning of a desire to possess it—a desire as natural to human nature as it is incompatible with the spirit of poverty. This disposition of the soul dries up in her the spring of divine love, and prevents her being able to say with the truthfulness of the religious who truly loves poverty: The Lord is my heritage and all my treasure.

It is true that by reason of their employment and their offices the lay-brothers are in danger of being wanting in poverty, and this sometimes to a serious extent, since indeed it is they who are charged with, and who dispose of, the property of the house. But besides that it is for the others they do this, and that, therefore, there is less danger of their becoming unduly attached to what they use; so also when these things are in course of time worn out or spoilt, if this has not been caused by their fault, and if they are certain that for their part they have used all care and

watchfulness possible to preserve them, greater care even than if the things had been their own, then they may remain undisturbed, and at the worst it is only the Superior who will have to suffer, he who has the charge of watching to see that nothing is wanting to the servants of God, and of detecting whence comes any fault. To you, then, my dear brothers, still belongs all that is best and most refreshing in this second stream of the paradise of earth.

But lest any doubt should remain in your mind, or I myself should mislead you at all, mark well what I have said : *It is that ordinarily speaking there is no great danger of your becoming too much attached to the things placed in your hands, and of which you have the disposal.* For I do not deny that such danger might arise, especially if you are trusted with certain employments, such as those of procurator, buyer, or steward, and I intend soon to lay this clearly before you. I maintain, however, that, take it all together, you run fewer risks than others in this matter, and I have no hesitation about this, for it a point of actual experience.

And what shall I say of the third source of blessing—chastity? Beyond doubt, without grace from God, and a signal grace too, we cannot preserve intact this lovely flower, nor keep safe so precious a treasure. It is exposed to so many assaults and dangers that come from within us, and from this body of sin which is not always like brass, as Job said when speaking of himself; and there are so many exterior occasions that under a thousand forms incite to evil, while we have not the strength of granite which, as Job again says, were much needed to resist them.

Hence it follows, my dear brothers, that we should avail ourselves of every possible means of resisting temptations when they come, and should pray to God with humility not to suffer us to yield to them; placing all our confidence in that grace which He gave to St. Paul, and which was sufficient for overcoming them. Above all, it is useful to the peace and security of the soul that you should keep yourselves at a distance from such temptations, nor expose yourselves to them, for were it wise to do so God Himself would not have so often warned you to fly the occasions, and our catechism would not have told us that the very best remedy against temptation is carefully to avoid it.

Look now for a moment at Priests when engaged in their ministrations, and you will see that from the very force of circumstances they are in greater peril of falling, because they find themselves incessantly in the midst of opportunities, of dangers, in fine, of temptations, from which you are free.

While you, being called by our Lord to aid them, do this indeed, but from a distance, by guarding the baggage as I have already said, and are placed so far off as to stand but small chance of being struck by any of the balls. Do you not see that this is a great gain for you?

I grant you willingly, that if Priests fight the battle like good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and if with eyes fixed on Heaven, and with shield ready to guard the heart, they act the part of the Machabees, then will they make many prisoners, they will capture valuable booty, and merit thus a brighter crown than you.

But this makes it none the less certain that in working out your sanctification, in fulfilling well your duties and responsibilities, you are further removed from danger, you are surer of your work, and you enjoy to the full the happiness and peace which chastity secures—this third source of true blessing in the paradise of Religion.

As to the fourth and last source, obedience, methinks it especially should pour the delicious streams of its water into your souls. Seeing that you never can be Superiors, you cannot follow your own wills in everything, nor in any one thing ; but this a Superior can do, who, though dependent on others for a number of things, yet is free to follow his own will in many, and even to impose that will on other men.

No doubt if the Superior possesses the right to command, his is also the duty of commanding well, and of not losing sight of God and His divine will in the government of his subjects, and in order that he may know that will he has safe rules and recourse to prayer. But, after all, you will not find two Superiors who would not be ready to change, and who would not prefer, to the thought of pleasing God in their command over others, that peace of mind and security which you enjoy every day in obeying and doing what is ordered. For in fine it is of faith that your performance of everything that is not sinful is agreeable to God, which is not the case with everything that the Superior commands, nor is he sure, even when he believes he is doing right, that his order is pleasing to our good God.

This reflection reveals to us the meaning of the words of a King at the hour of his death, when he said that he would most willingly exchange the sceptre of the whole world for the keys of a convent gate. I well believe it, for with these keys and in the practice of obedience he would be certain to open the wide portals of the gates of Heaven, whilst with his sceptre and his rule over others he could not be assured of being even able to open them with repeated strokes after a long time, so strongly would he find them locked and barred.

More than this too, my brothers, occupied as you are by obedience in material works and a good deal fatigued in consequence, you have not much time left for thinking and reflecting; and this again saves you from a deal of trouble and weariness of mind to which others are liable, whom you may see sometimes even in their youth with health lost, stomach disordered, blood impoverished, and old age creeping on before its time, ruined in short by mental toil and study.

When you observe that you yourselves are kept free from all these miseries, in spite of the fatigue of your body, you should rejoice at the good fortune of passing a happier and more tranquil life, combined with the merit of obedience and of very many other acts of virtue; you are in good health, you have all the strength requisite for filling with ease and full energy the offices intrusted to you.

Add to this that in almost every case you are able to fulfil various duties, for from the time of the noviceship care has been taken to instruct you in

them, and as it is no very difficult matter to attain a certain facility in these works, you can apply yourselves to them with almost equal readiness. Whence it follows that when obedience requires you to pass from one office to another, and you leave for example the trowel to take up the plane, or change the shoemaker's awl for the tailor's needle, it needs no great effort to overcome yourselves, since there can be neither great difficulty nor repugnance in making the exchange. But are you aware how much you have gained by it? My own experience assures me that you are not, and I suspect that no one has yet told you what I am about to tell you for your consolation. A large number of those who study, endure a sufficiently hard purgatory in this life, when, after giving themselves up to one particular study or mental occupation, and finding in this work something especially suited to their natural tastes, they are obliged suddenly to abandon this for an employment altogether opposed to their wishes and inclinations, forced to it either because circumstances demand a change, or because obedience and the rule of the Superior require it. Believe me a change like this costs and proves a real sacrifice, and when it lasts for long or throughout an entire life it amounts to true martyrdom. Yet, thanks be to God, you are not only delivered from this, but are freest of the free.

Yes, a thousand thanks are owing to God, for the great book which you have to study is the Crucifix, and on each page, from the first right on to the last, you will read there written in characters of blood the word *obedience*, and in that the assurance of a complete

victory, a noble triumph, and you will find at the foot of this Crucifix the gentle wave of peace and consolation flowing on for you.

But to conclude our subject well, and to draw you more powerfully still to correspond gratefully to so many favours, I pray you observe that you have entered a Religious Order wherein everything is provided for you, for soul as well as for body, without costing you anything; an Order in which all your needs are anticipated, as well for the delicate as for those in good health, for the young as well as for the aged; an Order in which nothing is spared in watching over you, and when you can no longer work, you will not the less be tenderly loved and cherished by the community. Within the Order you possess everything, nothing will be held back from you, and the Superior himself will more than once wash the dishes in which you have eaten. What acknowledgment then should you not render to God, who has called you to this blessed vocation, and with how great feelings of love are you not bound to correspond to this grace! See then that you really do so.

SECOND PART.

On the obligations, under which our brothers lie, of corresponding to the goodness of God in giving them so blessed a vocation.

THAT every favour claims due acknowledgement is a maxim written in the hearts of all men, and each time that we resist or forget this universal principle we deserve to be called thoroughly ungrateful, which is one of the most odious and degrading characters that we can bear. Gratitude, on the contrary, is an especially engaging quality. I do not mean any kind of gratitude, but that which is in real proportion to the benefit conferred. The philosopher Seneca says that chains were first invented in the world by him who did the first service to his fellow-man, because he at once bound and enchained to himself, by the duty of gratitude, the heart of him whom he had thus favoured.

If then, not one grace alone, but a large number of graces, singularly rich graces, are contained within the religious vocation, and belong to those whom our Lord has called to His service in the humble office of lay-brother in the Society of Jesus, it is most just and necessary that they on their part

should show themselves faithful and always grateful, and this they will prove by the care which they take to sanctify themselves, since this is the very end for which God has extended to them so great a grace.

But what ought to be the standard of this sanctity in our good brothers? To whom are we to give this title of *Perfect Lay-brother* without danger of deceiving ourselves? It is this that we are about to consider in the second part.

Having already proved that the two wings, on which religious mount upwards to God and unite themselves to Him, the source of all holiness, are prayer and labour, it remains for us to speak of these in two separate chapters, that our brothers, well understanding to what extent and for what reasons they should love both work and prayer, may find out by serious self-reflection how far they are really grateful for the blessing of their vocation.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE LOVE OF WORK.

THE necessity of labour is a general law imposed on the human race by our Lord, and there is not a single man who can claim exemption from this law, beginning with Adam, our first parent, on to the last of his children who shall be born into this world. And he who, under pretext of impossibility, or with the plea that he needs it not, refuses to work or tries to withdraw himself from this law, must be either a slave of the idleness which holds him blind, or else an unbeliever determined not to conform to that which God Himself has declared by the mouth of Job: As the bird has been created to fly through the air, so man has been created to work on the earth. And mark well how, even before his sin, and before the penalty of inevitable toil as the sad consequence of his sin, already had the natural law of labour been laid upon the head of man.

This truth once recognised, we can affirm that every man coming into this world has a vocation, the vocation to labour either with brain and mind, or with hand and arm, whether for the purpose of bringing his natural faculties into exercise, of procuring for himself the means of living, or of doing good to those who have need of his help.

Why, then, should we inculcate on our lay-brothers a peculiar love of labour, or why speak of it as one of the wings that are to bear them up to Heaven? Is not

the right accomplishment of all one's duties the means of going to God, and of these duties is not work the most essential?

Yes, my brother, and for that very reason must you be well acquainted with the different degrees existing in the actual accomplishment of this sacred duty. To be man brings with it the obligation to work, but when the title of Christian is added to that of man, one becomes all the more bound to this law of toil, and yet more if besides this he be a Religious, that is, a christian in the highest order; and if to the observance of the divine precepts he adds the observance of the Evangelical counsels, this alone pledges him to a further obligation still, and he must submit himself yet more completely to this law than others not called to so holy a vocation. What matter the kind of life, active or contemplative, or the kind of work, external or spiritual, of the body or of the mind; what matter whether it be of these two together, which we call the mixed life, as combining both action and contemplation, for labour is still the heritage, the patrimony of religious, their incessant occupation to the hour of their death; and either to abandon or to neglect it, would make them wanting in the engagements which they have voluntarily contracted with God.

To be a good religious and good at work are the same thing, as we may convince ourselves by reading the lives of the Fathers of the desert, and of all who have sanctified themselves by abandoning the world, whether they have actually quitted it to live in solitude, or have protested by their whole manner of life and conduct against worldly maxims, continuing to

live amongst men that they might contend with them at close quarters in order to save their souls. The latter have sanctified themselves by the work proper to the priesthood, in teaching and preaching, or in writing books, administering the Sacraments, giving Missions, or other similar works. And how many Priests, religious of our Society, have raised themselves to a state of perfection by such labours as these. While those former have gained the same end by the work of their hands in manual and domestic service, by those offices, in a word, which belong exclusively to the active life of Martha, and form the especial work of lay-brothers.

But, once more, why are our brothers obliged to have a real love for work? It is because they are, in the first place, men, and, in the next, christians and religious. And, now, why particularly should they love corporal works? It is because they are lay-brothers, and because they should feel persuaded that in constantly resisting the temptation to idleness, so natural to man, when they spur themselves well on, they do that which is very agreeable to God, they fulfil all the obligations of their holy state, and, without their desires going further, they can have all the merits and all the fruits of a sublime apostleship. For this reason, we may say with truth, that one of the feet with which the lay-brother advances onward in the way of perfection, one of the wings by which he raises himself towards God, is the love of manual work.

It remains for us to examine the true value and intrinsic merit of this labour, in order that our

brothers may feel assured that in loving it with all their heart, they are corresponding faithfully to the great blessing bestowed by our Lord on them in calling them to the Society.

The first point, which it is essential that those for whom this book is designed should know, is that corporal work, when offered up with a right intention, becomes practically an act of prayer; while the directing of this intention is an act of the contemplative life, an act at least as perfect as that of prayer. What consolation then for you, my dear brother, to know that when you thus work for the love of God and to please Him, and bear in mind that by this work for God you are serving the poor of Jesus Christ, as our father St. Ignatius directs you should labour! * what consolation to know that such work is a method of prayer, that it proves your love to God by acts, and makes you an especial object of the love of the Sacred Heart.

The good Brother Giles, so tenderly beloved by St. Francis, had learned this truth, when he replied to the bitter complaints of one of his companions who had been sent out to beg alms, and had not time to offer up his prayer: Ah, my brother! it is evident that we do not know the nature of prayer—to pray is to obey. This was the sentiment of all the Fathers, who have laid it down most positively that work truly sanctified is as meritorious as the most holy prayer: *That those always pray who always work.* Wherefore our holy Founder remarked to

* In an explanation of the Rules written by him, still preserved. *Vide* Annotation on Rule 15 of the Refectorian.

Brother Antony, who was a mason, that every time he placed in a brick, or spread out the mortar or lime, he added fresh lustre to his crown of glory.

In like manner St. Bernard told a brother, who was working with extraordinary zeal, that he could not fail of getting to Heaven so long as he was following the surest way of all, and that he would even escape Purgatory. The history of the Society furnishes us with another beautiful instance of the same truth. An Italian lay-brother named Simon, when at the point of death, appeared to Father Peter Scarga, rector of the college of Vilna, who observed that his hands shone much more brilliantly than any other part of his body, and was told that this was owing to the great amount of work which his hands had performed in the labours of his office.

This example may be made very useful to our dear lay-brothers, by preventing their ever regarding their hands with pain and a kind of compassion, when hardened or discoloured by work. Whereas they should look at them with satisfaction, congratulating them on the future glory reserved for them as being the chief instruments of their daily toil and hard labour. And when, at the hour of death, the same question is asked of them, that was asked of Arsenius, tutor to the two children of the Emperor Theodosius : What reflection it was that in that moment gave him most confidence? they will be able to reply in his words : These three reflections, that I have avoided as much as possible the company and society of men, that I have carefully observed silence, and, above all, that I have always been diligent in work.

Yet another excellent proof of the value and intrinsic merit of labour lies in the fact that this work of Martha can alone enrich the soul with every virtue. How so? By causing it to make very great progress in humility. For it is certain, according to St. Basil whom we have already quoted, that we cannot possess this virtue without acquiring all the others.

St. Dorothy narrates that a religious, having consulted with a person well informed, advanced in life, and full of experience, as to the true nature of humility, received for answer that it was a marvellous and divine quality, and that it was to be found in manual work performed in the spirit of wisdom and sanctity ; that is to say, resembling in no respect work done by men of the world, whose only motive is self-interest or caprice. This work must be undertaken with a pure intention, for the love of God, with the desire of pleasing and serving Him ; it must be actuated by love for our brothers, and a desire to imitate the Saints, to expiate our own sins and those of our neighbours ; a desire, in fine, to procure the salvation of souls in the aid that we can thus afford to those who consecrate themselves directly to that work. The Saint also assures us that labour humbles at the same time the body, the soul, and the heart ; and the holy Doctor, St. Augustine, expressly says that to heal the swellings of pride there is no more efficacious remedy than hard work. We have also the word of the Royal Prophet *—"Their heart is humbled with labours."

* Psalm cvi.

We are prepared, then, to see that in those places wherein holy humility, with all the other virtues, have flourished, I mean in those grand Monasteries of Nitria and the Thebáid, there, too, has labour been ever held in especial esteem and love. Cassian recounts that there were in this desert old men, long bent double beneath the weight of years, who put in practice the counsel of the Apostle,* to prepare with their own hands the food of each day, both for themselves and for those who came to visit them.

Thus we have no reason to be surprised that, persuaded of the importance of this virtue of humility, these saints and pious solitaries loved labour with intensity, as a merchant, in his attachment to gain, works with his whole soul, and manages his own affairs without companion. They constantly made choice of the most laborious method of providing for their needs, like those whom Cassian describes as preferring to expend great labour in going a thousand paces off to draw water at its source, rather than having it conducted close up to the gate of their monastery, as they might easily have done ; for they bore in mind the Apostolic maxim, that the recompense should be in proportion to the labour. What an example for you, my brother !

We have by this said enough to teach our lay-brothers the value of work, and to provide them with just thoughts and religious sentiments on so important a subject. Their sanctification depends on it, wherefore it is necessary for them to work without pause or rest, except at the times of prayer

* 1 Thess. iv. 11.

and spiritual exercises, by help of which they are to keep their ground and to make progress in fervour of spirit, and are to renew their strength and prepare themselves for fresh work.

Yes, my good brother, before all, and with scrupulous exactness, you must perform your spiritual exercises—meditation, prayer, reading, the two examens, and other duties, according to the rule which gives you, for such purpose, all the time and leisure you can desire. But immediately afterwards you must work, work always, work without remissness, except perhaps when some slight rest is absolutely necessary for gathering fresh strength in order to work again all the better.

If you have not done this, if you have spared yourself and have been afraid of too much fatigue; if, in short, you eat without working as much as you ought, you deserve the name of “Brother Fly,” as St. Francis called a brother who was willing to eat, but did not work, because flies live upon what they find to pick up, and do not earn what they eat.

Do not delude yourself by imagining that God will not condemn amongst the idlers a religious who neglects work for the sake of prayer. You will say, perhaps, that he has no other faults. No matter, he is in fault here, and deserves punishment like any other one who has sinned; recollection in silence, prayer itself at the time when one ought to be working, call it what you like, you will never make it to be prayer. And the reason, as Father Balthazar Alvarez remarked, is very simple—to pray is to be with God and to converse

with Him ; it is very evident therefore that he does not pray, who robs Him of that time which His Divine Majesty wills should be consecrated and given up to work.

Nothing illustrates our subject better than what we read in the chronicles of the Capuchin Fathers, concerning a certain lay-brother, who, whilst the others were sweeping the house, or were engaged in begging alms, or tilling the ground, or toiling hard in other corporal works, insisted on going up and down through the convent, repeating in tones full of gravity and recollection : Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things ; to prayer ! to prayer ! behold that which is necessary, instead of all this useless trouble and excitement. After a time this poor religious became very seriously ill, and our Lord manifested great goodness towards him, clearly because there was no malice in his fault. God appeared very distinctly to him in a vision, distributing crowns to all the other lay-brothers, but passing him by altogether, nay, more, this poor man felt himself on the point of being condemned along with the miserable herd of the slaves of idleness. Happily the vision was sent only as a warning, for he soon recovered his health ; but the lesson which it left behind was so complete and wholesome, that from that day he gave himself up to work with heart and soul, left off preaching about prayer, and never lost a moment of time to the hour of his death.

Let each one, then, of our brothers make up his mind not to waste a moment. This is the grand

secret for depriving the devil of a single instant in which to ruin him, for we may say with Cassian : The religious who works may be tempted by one devil, but he who does not work will be tempted by a thousand.

A good lay-brother, as soon as he has finished that which his office requires of him, will, in accordance with his rule, go and ask the Superior to give him something else to do. Our holy Father has made clear to us the reason of being attentive to this point, by an act which Father Maffei narrates in his life. He observed one day from a corridor of the house several brothers chatting and laughing near the gate, whereupon he ordered them to remove a heap of stones and gravel from one place to another. They obeyed at once, and when, three months after this, he again found them doing nothing and talking together, he laid the same work on them a second time, ordering them to carry the heap back to the spot where it was at first, and told them very calmly that nothing looked worse or was more dangerous in the service of God, than idleness.

You will always escape this fault if you are faithful to the rule of which I remind you ; and be assured of this, that when you come to render account to God as to whether you have observed it or not, you will remember none of those reasons which you perhaps at present use as a pretext for your idleness, that, for instance, you have been in other countries where they are neither so scrupulous nor so exacting, or that obedience does not interfere with our having a little

time to ourselves. Take my advice, and keep close to your holy rule ; ask for work when you have some moments to spare, nor seek rest till he, who is in charge over that matter, bids you take it, or has nothing more for you to do ; unless, indeed, you have really had a day already full of work. Even then you could imitate the holy Brother John Jimeno, an admirable model of all virtues, chiefly through his extreme ardour and love for work. This good brother daily came in from the country-house, of which he had charge, to the college, though his limbs were diseased, and he generally lost his rest at nights, and yet for many years he never gave more than three or four hours' repose to his body, passing the rest of the night in prayer that he might return to his work at early dawn. Thus did he prove the truth of what Father Alvarez so often said, that the relation, in which a good religious stands to God, is like that of a stone to the centre in which it finds rest ; it is in a state of violent agitation when held back and kept from balancing itself, but the instant that the obstacle is removed it falls back to that central point, and gradually settles down at rest.

Now it is certain that work done for the love of God and in its proper time does not interrupt, as I have already said, the union of the soul with its centre, and so does not keep it in a state of agitation, because work undertaken in this spirit is nothing else but the accomplishment of the will of God, it is thus the best of all prayers, teaching us to do everything really well, with love and by love, and for the good pleasure of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His holy Mother.

While Brother Francis Godoy, who obtained the crown of martyrdom along with Father Azevedo, was still a novice, and was employed one day in the service of the kitchen, he was asked by a Brother, who saw him working with extreme care in washing and cleaning the pots and pans, to what purpose he wore himself out trying to make them bright, seeing how soon they would be dirtied again? To what purpose! replied the good novice, it is that I may present nothing unbecoming before Mary, our holy Mother, because it is for her I am working thus hard. Ah, there can be little doubt that work so undertaken is an exercise of pure love, and God recompenses it by a marvellous increase of the same virtue, by communicating Himself to these faithful souls, and by raising them to very high sanctity.

It is in this way that He deigned to sanctify His great servant, Father Balthazar Alvarez, when for the love of Him he entered the noviceship in a religious house, in which during several months he filled the office of cook with as much zeal and goodwill as though he were to remain in that office all his life. It was the consideration of the matter in this point of view that made St. Jerome Natal, so beloved by our father St. Ignatius, say that he envied only two classes of men in the Society—the novices, who have but to study their own advancement in the spiritual life, and the lay-brothers, who in the midst of their work are always free from the application of mind which is so necessary in the studies and other duties of the Fathers, so that they are able to pray without ceasing.

With all truth, therefore, could Father Laynez say, as we learn from Father General Mutio Vitteleschi, that the grade of lay-brother in the Society is excellent and perfect, that this state makes them like those ancient Fathers who gave all the hours of the day to labour and prayer, thus joining together in an agreeable intercourse the prayer of the heart and the work of the hands ; and according to this spirit did the same Father General desire that the lay-brothers of the Society should be formed, adding that from this spirit of perfection, and of love for prayer and work, springs all the good service which the Society, their mother, can look for from them. A good lay-brother always does everything that he can, and never looks about for idle pretexts to escape work. He avoids no trouble, he consults not his own ease, and even if he has not much skill he does everything sufficiently well, so that they who observe him cannot help saying : Poor fellow, he does his very best ! He has a good will, he loves God with all his heart, even if he be not over-clever.

And, speaking of capacity or skill, it is right you should know, my dear brother, that, in order to be a good lay-brother, this is no more necessary than it is sufficient by itself. It is not all-sufficient, because with that quality alone you might easily become a clever administrator or steward, a good workman, or even skilled artist, as we see countless such in the world, who are far better hands than you. In fact, it is true that Superiors would prefer to employ strangers rather than brothers who have capacity, and nothing more ; because without zeal for labour, and other

virtues, lay-brothers would cost always much more, and would besides cause mischief in their house. Nor is skill a necessity, because the desire to do right, combined with a docile disposition and that ready will which works miracles, supplies perfectly the place of talent. Every Superior who understands his office would like better to have one single brother, though awkward and little able to learn many kinds of employment, than a dozen of those who are sharp and clever, but have a tendency to pride and independence, along with the habit of making a great display of their small merit. The full force of this was brought out by the Father General whom we lately quoted, when he strongly recommends Provincials, in admitting subjects as lay-brothers, not to regard their degree of capacity for various offices, so much as the amount of docility, and of tenderness and tractableness of disposition they may show, and also certain natural qualities and points of character capable of assuming the form peculiar to the state to which they are called. For we may be sure of this, that those in whom such dispositions may be traced will always make themselves very useful in the Society, whilst he who is wanting in these qualities will be enough to spoil an entire community. It would cost much to have one like the poor brother described in the history of the Capuchins. This man had every sort of good quality and plenty of skill ; but in order to avoid having to do what his Superior had ordered, he pretended to be lame. Some time after this, while he held a large pair of scissors in his hand, by some means he let it fall, and its iron point, entering into his foot, rendered him actually lame for life.

The good lay-brother knows also how to avoid certain mischievous complaints, as that few things and easy things are required of others, while he is made to toil and perspire like a negro. For if a good brother forms his judgment as to that which obedience requires, not according to the dictates of self-love and idleness, but of calm and self-possessed reason, he cannot but acknowledge it to be just that Superiors should imitate nature herself, as St. Basil observes: Thus the hand does not oblige the foot to do that which the hand ought to do itself, and the foot does not have recourse to the hand. The hand itself, in carrying anything, will not bear all the weight, nor will it even lay too large a share on one single finger, but each member, under the direction of nature, that is always so wise, acts according to its strength. The stronger helps the weaker, and comes to its aid, and all combine in the labour which this union of members will carry to completion. There is not the slightest danger of ever having a word of complaint in a house or college where all the brothers have, as though graven on their hearts, the grand maxim of Tertullian: *Virtue is built up by firmness of character, it is destroyed by softness.* Virtue increases and strengthens herself by labour, while, on the contrary, softness and idleness weaken and wear her away, till she becomes reduced to nothing, and her very existence is lost.

The good lay-brother of the Society works with zeal and constancy, whether he be commanded gently, as though requested to do each thing, or whether he is told to do it, drily and without any

ceremony. He even prefers to be spoken to in this latter way, because he loves his work, and because he obeys as a good son of St. Ignatius, who in the fourth chapter of the Examen directs that the brother in charge of the kitchen ought, from time to time, to speak rather shortly to the Fathers who come by order of the Superior to help in the kitchen, and at other times to ask them humbly to do what he wants. But still often, and especially at the beginning, it were better for the cook to command rather than to request them, in order to avoid the appearance of its being merely a man and not God who gave the order, for that merely as a man he should even request such a thing, would be unbecoming, since the person to whom the order is given is a Priest.

To bring this matter to a conclusion, a faithful lay-brother has a mortal horror of a certain manner of speaking which flesh and blood suggest; a horror, too, of some strange principles that come only of idleness, and which it is sad if any should follow, or, still worse, sometimes even allow their lips to utter. These I do not wish to name in this place, they are too well known, and make one blush. Unhappy the house in which any number of the brothers were to adopt such a practice! A Superior who suffered it would well deserve the reproach uttered by Isidore of Pelusium to the hermit Paul, because he gave food to lay-brothers who, under different pretexts, would not work. This was in his eyes a crying injustice, contrary to the command of Jesus Christ and the teaching of St. Paul. May God for ever preserve all the brothers of the Society from a like judgment! Amen.

I pray God may inspire the love of work in all, and give them grace to prefer it before all things with a holy simplicity. O my brothers, with work and the rosary of our Lady, you are provided with everything that you want to lead you to Heaven, so said St. Louis Bertrand, and he was happy when he saw the lay-brothers of his Order simple, faithful in working, humble, and fully content in the observance of their rules, that rule in particular which is laid also on our dear brothers, namely, that they should not have books, nor even read without permission, nor wish to study in order to know more.

CHAPTER II.

ON PRAYER.

FOR the lay-brother who is convinced that he cannot serve God without working, and who, through love for his Divine Master, devotes himself constantly to work with all that heart and purity of intention which we have dwelt upon, for him what we are now about to say on the subject of prayer, and the affection we should have for that holy exercise, will be scarcely needed, and this chapter itself be unnecessary. The work done by the good lay-brother is, as we have said, a true prayer never interrupted, and God, in recompense for his fidelity and generosity in thus working for His glory, will Himself reveal to his soul things more wonderful and beautiful about the method of prayer

than ever he could learn from books. But if unhappily the preceding chapter has failed to produce the desired effect on all my readers, it were well to explain in few words what we mean by this second wing on which our brothers should fly to God. -

Let us begin, then, by saying that, even after you have been instructed in this matter, were you able to say off by heart the whole *tréatise* of Father Alphonsus Rodriguez on prayer, you have still much to do before you can attain the sanctity to which God has called you in granting you a religious vocation. He wishes you to become a man of prayer, one who does not make perfection to consist in repeating many prayers, but in doing the will of God with readiness and fidelity in the fulfilment of his duties, and who knows how to unite to this constant exactness a particular affection for spiritual things, feeling it a kind of necessity to occupy himself always with them every free moment that his other duties allow him.

Behold the true idea of a man of prayer in the Society, and if at the present moment you have any different view of it you must renounce that, and apply your mind to the carrying out in yourself the designs of a loving Providence, who has called you in youth to advance along the path of prayer; and you must take for the ordinary subject of your meditations the holy law of God, that according to the thought of the Royal Prophet, you may never lose sight of the divine flame, which should guide you to Heaven, beyond all risk to your salvation.

But at this point I fancy I hear you saying to me, that if these are the designs of the Divine Providence

regarding your soul, it appears to you each day more difficult to enter into and to follow them, as this word *meditation* frightens you, and that you will come in the end to believe it to be impossible for you to meditate thus constantly and with fruit. Hence you conclude that this exercise is not suitable for a man without education, and devoted by his very profession to the most humble offices, and to the labour of his hands.

“If experience serves for anything,” certain religious will say (amongst whom indeed may be those who have taught you this doctrine), “we cannot venture to doubt, nay, we acknowledge at once that meditation is most useful, and that it contributes greatly to form the saint; but yet we must leave its practice to those who, from habits of reflection in the study of sciences, have learnt the art of penetrating these holy truths to their very depths, and of drawing from this exercise practical consequences for the salvation of the soul.”

There is in this a very serious error, my dear brother, it is an invention of the perfidious and crafty enemy of souls, a lie all the more perilous because it disguises itself under the appearance of truth, it being certain that meditation requires, especially at first, some care and labour, since it exercises the three powers of the soul. We present before our minds a spiritual subject, we reflect on it, and make a practical application of it according to our wants, and all this requires some effort. The flesh is weak, it is a pleasure to her to rise but little above the earth, it is not without pain that she approaches those objects which do not flatter the

senses. Yes, all this is true, and yet who, in spite of it, will dare to say that meditation is beyond the reach of simple souls and less cultivated minds, that it can be practised only by the learned and those who have studied much?

Now in the first place, my brother, you must well understand that to meditate is simply to do that which you are doing every day and every hour, as to each thing in which you are occupied. It is neither more nor less than this, it is what every peasant, and every good man does who has never placed his foot in a school. He meditates, nevertheless, and meditates well, and draws great profit from his meditation, when he so directs his thoughts as to protect and secure his own interests.

But observe, now, how admirably he exercises his memory, his understanding, and his will in placing before his mind, with true earnestness, the subject or business of which there is question; in seeking out all the reasons which can help on, or stand in the way of, success; and in forming, at the end, his resolution according to the light which he has gained, after examining the motives for and against. After this it is well-nigh impossible to mislead him, either as to his calculations or his true interests. Well, now, that is meditation, and if, when there is question only of the things of this life, it is so simple and easy, I cannot understand why we should regard it as impossible, or nearly so, when the matter under discussion is the most important thing in the whole world—our eternal salvation. This difficulty can be accounted for in no other way, than as the result of a sort of

indifference and negligence, which creeps over us and makes us almost stupid in that which regards the interests of Heaven. It is the result, too, of the efforts which the devil makes to disgust us with meditation and contemplation, because he knows well that meditation and sin cannot live in harmony together, and that a soul which does not meditate is like a garden without water, a grate without fire, a ship without a rudder.

You must no longer, then, my dear brother, lay upon your want of education the blame of the little progress which you have made in the holy exercise of meditation, since it has been proved that God communicates Himself more often and more freely to men of humble and simple heart, as may be seen in numerous examples. Be humble, full of contempt for yourself and for the world, have were it but a little desire of the good of your soul, if it only be sincere, and I promise you that you shall know how to pray, for of your own accord you will go to God, who will know well how to teach you, not like the teachers of this world who are unable to impart to their pupils the talents necessary for making progress, but by filling your soul with His most abundant light. And then you will be forced to confess that it is a happy ignorance that brings us near to God, and that learns to know Him more and more—the God who makes it His delight to hold intercourse with those that are simple of heart and humble of spirit.

Before I leave this point I must quote an instance from the tenth volume, and eleventh treatise of the

works of Father Alphonsus Salmeron. He gives the account of a young man, who was so stupid that he could scarcely recognise or join together the letters of the alphabet, and who yet, feeling himself much drawn to meditation and prayer, prayed after the following manner: O my God, said he, behold all the letters of the alphabet, make up of them that which you will, and that which best befits me, for it is exactly that which I wish to think at this moment, and that which I desire you should say to me. Without more labour than this, his soul was fed during the whole of his prayer with unspeakable delights.

This wise and holy Father tells us, in the same place, of another lad so weak and dull of intellect that he could never learn by heart the first Latin words of the Psalm *Miserere*, &c. Instead of saying: *Miserere mei, Deus*—Have mercy on me, O Lord, he always said, to the very day of his death: *Miserere tui, Deus*—Have mercy on you, O my God. But these words he repeated with so great faith and devotion, that one day, after offering up this beautiful prayer, he crossed miraculously, without danger and with dry feet, a furious torrent, in which he would certainly have perished. Happy ignorance this!

After thus overthrowing the excuse of want of instruction, we must refute another not less common, by which certain religious deem themselves dispensed from hard work in order that they may become men of prayer. It is so much lost time, say they; I pass a whole hour in driving off distractions, without obtaining one moment's real recollection, it seems as though to give the signal

for this exercise and to call into my mind every kind of vain, useless, absurd thought, were one and the same thing. To oblige men, whose whole life is active and perpetual movement, to make meditation ! You might as well shut up a lark in a cage, which, it is said, will only pine away and die in its prison.

That may be true, brother, but I pray you tell me then, do you try any means of avoiding these distractions and wanderings of mind, as well as every other folly which you allow to run about in your imagination as it likes ? You, perhaps, are amongst the number of those who begin to meditate without thinking even what they are about to do, who dream only of counting the minutes, and watching how the hour is passing which is to them so heavy, so terribly wearisome. If this be your case, then what right have you to complain of distractions ? You carry with you a soul filled with a thousand idle thoughts, all which you ought to have left behind at the door of your little oratory. You give very slight heed to the remote preparation, though so important, consisting in habitual recollection of mind and the watchful guard of the senses ; or, rather, you allow these very considerable liberty even during the time that you consecrate to prayer, and then you lament over your distractions. But complain rather of yourself, reflect that God, our Creator and kind Father, knows well our extreme weakness, that He pities it, and pardons all the dissipation that comes from it, or from the fickleness of our minds, when the defect is really unavoidable ; but He never can excuse that

which springs from negligence, from laziness, or from want of respect for His divine presence and of gratitude for His love and His mercies.

In truth, nothing is more sad than to have to tell persons in religion that they draw scarcely any fruit from their meditation, because they begin it without knowing what they are doing, and hence almost always pass the time in doing nothing at all. God forbid that ever so grievous an accusation be laid against a lay-brother of the Society. A fine excuse indeed to give at the tribunal of God, when you are asked why you have not become a saint, and a great saint too, that you did nothing during your meditation, when there was so much to be done, or rather, when there was everything to be done !

You must not be astonished then, my dear brother, if I deprive you of this bad excuse, by telling you, or, rather, reminding you, of a few little things you have to do during the time of prayer.

And to begin, convince yourself well that, in the act of this exercise of prayer and meditation, he who really wills does always more than he whose thoughts are troubled about what he can do ; because action depends rather on the will than on the capacity, and every objection against this truth is inspired only by idleness and self-love. That we may understand this, it is sufficient to remark here how our good father and founder, St. Ignatius, a man of such prudence and wisdom that he has not chosen to lay down for all his children an equal measure of exterior mortification, but has left to the discretion of Superiors and spiritual directors the care of regulating and modify-

ing penances in proportion to the strength of mind or body of each religious, did, nevertheless, when he was treating of the subject of meditation, give particular rules and teach particular methods. And in heaven he has by his prayers obtained an increase of the spirit which he imparted on earth to his infant Society, and especial grace from God guiding general congregations to set apart a time fixed and obligatory on all, during which, being free from every other occupation and work, they should apply themselves to meditation, in other words, to the exercise of the three powers of the soul.

“Such is,” as Father Nepveu tells us in his treatise on mental prayer, “the method which St. Ignatius has given us in the book of his Exercises, a method equally good, solid, and easy ; which Popes have approved by solemn Bulls, and which a great number of Saints have practised with success and profit. It is in vain that ignorant and evil-minded men have sought to depreciate this method, and that pretended mystics and visionaries have little valued it, declaring that it is not suitable for elevated souls whom God calls to contemplation ; for, on the contrary, this method prepares the soul insensibly and by degrees, not indeed for a contemplation barren and idle, subject to the most senseless and dangerous illusions, as experience has proved in these times ; but for a solid contemplation, the fruit of constant mortification of self-love, of the will, of the passions, of the senses. And it is to this most necessary result that the method of St. Ignatius conducts our souls, if we follow it with fidelity.”

I have given the above passage at length that I might place clearly before you the first thing you have to do when you address yourself to meditation through obedience. Do that which you would do if you saw our holy Father Ignatius standing alone beside you, and heard him assuring you that you never can be a true son of the Society if you regard with contempt, or even with little respect, these methods and helps which are so essential to your sanctification and salvation; because you stand in need of them, that you may learn to overcome yourselves and to subject yourselves to them. If you practise them only with self-indulgence and disgust, there are many others having perhaps less facility, less strength of health, less help of Divine grace than you, who perform them with unfailing fidelity and great fervour.

In presence of such a witness how carefully would you pray and meditate, with how great recollection, with how great fruit! How well would you then exercise your memory and your understanding in order to produce in your will the most holy acts of admiration, joy, love, hope, gratitude, fear, or repentance! How firm and practical would be your resolutions for the correction of your faults, and the acquisition of solid virtues, for becoming, in fine, a Saint—a great Saint, that one object of meditation, the only one, in truth, that our holy and most beloved Father had before him in giving us these methods.

Ah, I well believe it, you will say, if St. Ignatius were there before my eyes! Yes, indeed, my brother. But what? Jesus Christ, is He not close beside you

in the Sacrament of the Altar? And God Himself, the three adorable Persons of the Blessed Trinity, do They not see, surround, and penetrate you. That God, whose infallible Word assures you that He both can and will recompense with interest the little sacrifices and efforts you will make to overcome yourselves, and the patience you will at this very moment show, notwithstanding all your weaknesses, is He not there? And you, too, will you not decide on practising faithfully for God, your God, this exercise of the faculties of your soul and of your body, observing with zeal and in profound recollection the holy methods and pious practices left for you by your good Father and Master in Jesus Christ.

But in addition to this, tell me, my brother, are you as constant and faithful as you ought to be in scrupulous attention to what our holy Saint calls the Additions to our meditation? Yet these are infallible helps to doing it well, and prevent our losing our time miserably during it. Examine yourself conscientiously and seriously on that which is a chief point in the whole matter, and from this very day be assured that you can never be free from reproach before the tribunal of God if you gain no fruit from your meditation, because you can no longer assert that your mind would still have been as empty, that your thoughts would still have been as wandering, and that you could not have drawn more profit from this exercise, even if you had attached more importance to the Additions, and had been more faithful to their practice. Nay, I

will go further than this, and I will grant you willingly that, in spite of your continual efforts to draw water from the rock, and to exercise in due order the three powers of your soul, you would lose all your trouble, for your heart would still remain all through the meditation dry as a piece of wood, and your head little better than a weathercock. Yet what consequence do you wish to draw from all this? Would you still insist that meditation was not made for you, because your soul resembles barren land of the very worst description, one of those fields from which one can expect nothing, notwithstanding all the care and hard toil we may expend on it.

Pay good heed to what I say, for you may easily deceive yourself. Why are you not doing your best to triumph over this habitual incapacity for meditation, this constant dissipation of mind, this perpetual dryness? They may be, and undoubtedly are very often a proof that God demands from you fidelity and perseverance, and sends this trial for your greater good in the exceeding tenderness of His Heart, according to the love with which He directs everything that concerns you.

St. Teresa of Jesus was especially drawn to the humble confession of this, when, during eighteen years of dryness in prayer, she had in a manner lost the presence of her Divine Spouse. But she was full of patience, she armed herself with perseverance, she laboured, prayed, and entreated, till at length the clouds dispersed, the sun shone forth and inundated her soul with floods of light, so that not only

was she herself enlightened, but she was enabled to enlighten a multitude of other souls.

What misfortune then for her, and for us, if she had at any time lost courage, if she had acted like that lukewarm religious, who, having only hard bread to eat, and a bad knife to cut it with, condemned himself to die of hunger. The consequence of conduct so unreasonable is that we lose, without any hope of profit, the best part of our religious life ; and, besides, the precious gift and inestimable favour granted to man of being able to hold familiar intercourse with God, and thus learn some of the mysteries of heaven, becomes changed into a thing of no use, nay, even hurtful to us, since it makes the hour of meditation only an hour of temptation through the malice of the devil, who hastens at the same time to attack the negligent religious, being permitted to do so by the justice of God.

Alas, for the man who thus loses patience ! He already knows what is reserved for him, he must live like one fastened to a chain ; for, do what he will, he must go like the rest to meditation, or to make believe at least to meditate, yet this without any profit. Nay, he goes, with the certainty that for him the source of the Divine mercies is closed up, the channel of the gifts of sanctification and perseverance is drained. From day to day this poor religious only becomes more tepid and negligent, and by that tepidity he will be dragged on to his ruin, to the point even of abandoning his habit and losing his vocation. There is but a step between these two, from not praying to not acting.

Seeing then, my brother, the deplorable history of all those whom you may have observed suddenly lose their vocation, let there be no mistake. It is written: Expect the Lord and keep His ways. Do you thus hope? It is well, but meantime advance with all possible fidelity along the road which God will take to reach your soul. This road is generally the path of meditation. You must then force yourself to follow it, you must fight your way through the snares of the enemy. If you cannot sail on with a good and favourable breeze, you must take to the oars, strain every nerve and muscle, and thus change the hour of prayer into an hour of mortification. Then you must humble yourself in the presence of God, annihilate yourself at the sight of your miseries, and ask pardon for having been the voluntary cause of your incapacity by an inordinate attachment to earthly things.

Now tell me, brother; how many examples could you quote of religious whom you have known, who would be able to say when they became turncoats and gave up their holy vocation, that they had been faithful to these functions while with you in the Society? Impossible! You could not name one. Had there been even one, I would be the first to allow you to follow the inspirations of your sloth.

Be persuaded, my dear brother, it is sloth of the very worst kind which leads a religious to live, day after day, without making his meditation. And yet, I ask you: could the Society, your mother, do any one thing more than she has done to help you to triumph over your weakness, and to warn you in time against the dangers of this negligence. From the very

novitiate she has used every endeavour to inspire you with a love of this exercise, by explaining to you what it really is, and what the Saints have found it to be, that is to say, easy and full of sweetness and delight. There are in the Society four objects of study which in a manner form but one, and these four are the Institute, the life of its holy Founder, the book of the Exercises, and the work of Rodriguez. These four are like the wheels of some noble chariot in which we should mount to heaven, and if you would know what these four books teach, then I tell you they furnish you with the surest and most blessed means of attaining to God. They conduct you thither by the direct path when they teach you meditation ; and everything therein tends, directly or indirectly, to this one end, to make you a man of prayer.

But the Society does not stop here, for, knowing and understanding your feebleness, she makes it her business to anticipate the evil which the tempter could do to your soul through the suggestion that you have had no studies, and are, therefore, incapable by yourself of meditating properly ; she does for you that which you yourself do to a watch every night when you wind it up, she winds you up and prepares you for going on again the following day. And, at the hour which calls all the others to prepare their meditation according to the method of Ignatius, she charges a grave and experienced Father to give you the points each evening, and to direct you how to apply them. He, as it were, holding a torch before you, leads you along in the path of meditation, communicating to you the lights which God gives him on

the subject, or which the Saints themselves have drawn from it before you.

What goodness on the part of the Society, our mother, to promote your good, O my dear brother ! What cause of thankfulness to those who desire to sanctify themselves ! But I am obliged to add, in respect of any one who will not profit by these favours, how great a subject of confusion and shame for you on the day of Judgment, if the enemy of souls can accuse you then of having despised this tender care of your mother, and of having allowed so great a treasure of heaven to be lost, day by day, on the return of the same hour, during so great a number of years ; letting yourself fall asleep at the sound of the voice of him who gives you the points, or paying so little attention to what he says that so far as regards him it is labour lost, with no more result than if he had been writing on water.

Heaven grant that two-thirds of those, who in excuse for drawing little fruit from their meditation pretend they can remember nothing in the morning, and have forgotten the points given to them, though explained and repeated with so much care the night before, may not have other matter to reproach themselves with than want of memory, as the cause of their forgetfulness. There is much reason to fear that a serious want of goodwill has prevented their making real efforts or availing themselves of effectual means to conquer sleep ; for this was certainly not so strong upon them during the recreation that immediately preceded, and which lasted a considerable time. Nay, we may well fear that during it those vain

thoughts and distractions were not driven away, which would have far less easily absorbed their minds in the ordinary work of their office. Believe me, there is a serious evil in all this.

But, as I have the strongest possible desire to appear just in your eyes, and to exaggerate nothing, I will suppose that you are really faithful, attentive, and desirous to make use of the talent—I would rather call it the grace—which the Society confers upon you every day; and yet that you cannot, in spite of your wish, through fault either of memory or of capacity recall to your mind one single thought of all those which have been placed before you in the points, even though you tried to remember them up to the moment in which sleep took possession of you, after you had gone to bed. I will suppose all this. Well then, the hour for meditation has come, and yet your head has no thoughts in it, and your mind is like a surface without any impression on it; there does not remain with you the bare shadow of a remembrance, not one word. What will you do during the hour of sixty minutes, one following after the other? What will you do? Anything surely, I answer, rather than do nothing. And you will, notwithstanding, meditate well, my dear brother, as I shall now explain to you.

If there is sufficient light in the place where you make your meditation, or in which you wait for the signal to commence it, the matter is very easy. Take up the book containing the points given the night before, or even any other subject of meditation, and in this way you will make the exercise more easy

to you, for now the water is about to pour itself on the rock. Read a few lines, pause for a little, reflect, and soon, following the ordinary method, you will be led on to make acts of the will and to form some good resolution, a practical resolution to amend your life, applying yourself in a special manner, either to the virtue that you above all wish to acquire, or to the more ordinary faults which you ought to know already through the help of each day's particular examen—that second powerful and indispensable means of attaining our sanctification. Repeat this action from time to time during the hour, and when the signal for the end is heard, tell me whether you have found the hour long.

But if you have not sufficient light in the church or tribune to read by, because, perhaps, it is not yet daylight, even then you have no excuse for losing your time, and I will show you what you can do. It is impossible, after spending some years in religion, after hearing so many sermons and exhortations, and reading spiritual books, after being present so often during the explanation of the catechism, and during the reading of the life, passion, and death of our Saviour, that nothing whatever remains in your mind of all these good words, and of all the good reflections which they must have produced within you. It is impossible that no thought whatever is left behind, that you have not at your command one evangelical precept, one eternal maxim, one saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor the recollection of any one of His mysteries towards which you feel some little devotion and attraction. What! is there absolutely nothing that

you can place before your eyes, nothing that can be of service to your soul when she is in good disposition, nothing that can draw her to recollection, can nourish or influence her during this short hour of meditation—it is impossible !

What! you could contemplate with the eyes of your mind your good Jesus while He was being crowned with thorns, or at the time of His scourging, in the agony of the Garden of Olives, or on Mount Calvary on the Cross, and yet in truth find nothing to say to Him! Not even when, seeing He suffered so much, so much too for you, it is most just that you should suffer a little for Him. At the sight of this would not your soul feel necessarily drawn to acts of admiration and compassion, or else of confusion and of shame, on reflecting who it is that suffers, and for whom He suffers; would not your soul be drawn yet more to acts of love, and of grief over your sins, and of desire that it might annihilate itself for the glory of God who has redeemed you at so great a price. It will not be enough for you to make these acts in a general way, and so undecidedly that they vanish into air, they must be exact and determined, and, more than all, practical; as for instance by making a resolution to perform some action of humility which God has been asking of you for a long time, or to observe silence on an occasion when the signal to do so is given by the Superior in your office, or to obey with respect the decision of the Superior under circumstances which, had they happened yesterday, would probably have led through your self-love to exterior disobedience or internal murmurings; or, once more,

to show yourself gentle, pleasant, on good terms with your brothers, patient in suffering and fatigue, strict in keeping silence, watchful to practise holy poverty, &c.

And mark this well, that such practical resolutions for one day, for neither more nor less than the twenty-four hours immediately following the meditation, could be equally well applied by you to a meditation on one of the three great ends of life, by reflecting for a few moments on some chief truth like the following: *For a moment of pleasure, an eternity of pain. What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Death is certain, we must die one day—and yet uncertain, I know not when—only once, I cannot die a second time,* and many more like these. Such sentences are capable of fixing the attention of the most uninformed mind, and of attaching to the will of God the most independent spirit. Doubt not, my good brother, that the word which converted St. Francis Xavier, and made a Saint of him so rapidly, even at one stroke, is possessed of full power to sanctify you by little and little, if you repeat it often and constantly reflect upon it in your heart.

But perhaps you will tell me, all this is true, yet as regards myself, I am not able to make even this small amount of meditation. My answer is: even so, yet still you are not excused from meditation, for there is another manner of meditating open to you. Employ the first quarter of an hour in making acts of faith, hope, and charity, of thanksgiving, of contrition, of oblation to God of your actions, your senses, your

body, and the faculties of your soul, and lastly of uniting your actions to those of Jesus and Mary. During the second quarter of an hour repeat the commandments of God, take each of the capital sins in order, with plenty of time for reflecting how on all these points you have grievously offended God, and then weep over your sins, asking forgiveness for them. Very likely you will have filled up the hour given to meditation before you have finished this pious exercise, but should there be a little time to spare, turn over in your mind, one after the other, the many blessings which you have received from God, such as creation, preservation, redemption, &c. Should more time yet be left, which appears improbable, have recourse to that holy practice of St. Ignatius—the third manner of prayer, and repeat slowly, as though you spoke with sighs from your heart and the aspirations of your soul, the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, the *Creed*, or any other form of prayer, taking care to enter well into the meaning of the words you utter, and to fill your mind with the tenderest possible feelings of love. Above all, do not forget to devote some moments to an immediate preparation for Holy Communion, should it be the rule for you to go that morning, or should you have obtained especial leave from the Superior. Carry this out, my brother, and you will thank me much for the advice.

I will conclude with one more counsel, taken from the life of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi. Without doubt this Saint had read, in the book of the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, the beautiful words which the soul addressed to our Lord: “My God, I am not worthy

of your consolations, I deserve not your visits, I have been so ungrateful. But if you deprive me of them I will still console myself, and all my happiness shall be in doing your will and in conforming myself to all the sufferings which you think good to send me, and which I have so much deserved." Not content with making this act of submission, the Saint besought our Lord never to visit her with His consolations and special favours during meditation, but on the contrary, to embitter it with gall, for that was all that she merited. And our Saviour heard her prayer, for during five entire years He left her soul in extreme aridity and in very great darkness, with a terrible weariness of mind and insupportable disgust for prayer, to such an extent that she declared she could not have suffered more had all her limbs been torn in pieces, while at the same time she suffered hourly all the temptations and assaults of hell. But at last the trial of her constancy ceased, and her good Jesus gave her full recompense even to a hundred-fold; and the consolations, which she had refused through love for God, she then received and carefully cherished in humility, not with any feeling of self-love, but in order to advance more and more in the spiritual life. She did not, therefore, esteem or love these favours except for the one reason that they were a precious gift from the hands of God, a motive which St. Francis of Sales puts before us in his treatise on the Devout Soul. What an example for you, my dear brother; never suffer yourself to forget it, when God shall console you in recompense for your efforts.

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE LAY-BROTHERS SHOULD LEARN TO MAKE
GOOD CONFESSIONS AND COMMUNIONS.

Article I.—On Confession.

IT is impossible that a lay-brother of the Society of Jesus can be wholly ignorant of that which every Christian should know, the power, namely, and virtue of the Sacraments of Penance and of Holy Eucharist to advance us towards sanctity and perfection. But he may very easily become a little too familiar with these graces through the very habit of receiving them often, and so the miserable laziness, which always draws us into doing badly what costs, and requires effort, makes him, too, forget this sentence of St. Gregory: *It is not audacity to approach often, but to approach even but once unworthily.*

It is from this rock, against which all who frequently confess and communicate may easily dash themselves, that I wish to rescue you, my dear brothers. I desire, first, to save you from the danger of being shipwrecked and of perishing within the very port itself; and, next, to enable you to gather in most fruit from the graces attached to these means which help you so powerfully to please God, and to become saints and perfect men in a comparatively short time. Read, then, attentively what I advise you to do, and in the first place with regard to confession.

1. Never look upon confession as a matter of small importance, and though you may imagine yourself free from grievous sins, do not think for a moment that you have no need of self-examination, or of exciting yourself to contrition. Regard it, on the contrary, as one of the most serious of all points, and the chief matter you have to settle during the week. This was the constant practice of that good religious of the Order of St. Dominic, who, at the moment of his death, replied with perfect calm to one of his brothers, who was persuading him to make a good confession : During thirty years I have, by the mercy of God, bestowed all my care upon making my ordinary confessions well.

2. You will form within yourself this same goodwill at the first signal given for the preparation, and when the moment itself has come, you will cast yourself down in the presence of God, and in a prayer short but full of fervour, you will demand of Him clear light by which to know your faults, and abundant grace to detect them and confess them fully at the sacred tribunal.

3. You will then begin your examen, which can be so much the shorter and easier if it be not long since you last confessed, and if you have been faithful in examining yourself with attention and fervour twice a day, according to the rule.

Were you to ask me which form of self-examination is best, I would say, without hesitation, that one which appears to you the best for yourself. All the different methods are good, if only you are well convinced of this point, namely, that confession is

one of the most valuable religious acts of a man's whole life. If you are well persuaded of this, you will never examine your conscience carelessly, either with or without a method ; even when your memory has no more power to call your faults again to mind, than water has power to preserve that which is written upon it.

You know that there must be in hell a vast number of men who had a most excellent memory while on earth, but there is not a single one there who had a good will. See, then, that you have this, and that it is thoroughly good, and then do all that you can to make up for what you may have forgotten.

But lest what I have said may still be insufficient, I will suggest a short method of self-examination, with the view rather of pointing the way out to you, than doing anything more.

I will begin by taking two things for granted ; first, that either your own conscience or the testimony of your spiritual father has given you all security with regard to your past confessions, so that you enjoy full peace and tranquillity in the depth of your soul ; and, secondly, that you are not ignorant of the great advantage and importance of confessing light faults and venial sins, and of telling their number, though it is not absolutely necessary that you should do so. Confession of these helps much to excite us to sorrow and self-correction, and if we cannot mention them with greater exactness, we can at least approach the number, accusing ourselves for about so many times in a month, or a week, or a day, more or less. And now commence to examine yourself according to the

following order, finding out the faults which you have committed against God, against your neighbour, against yourself.

Against God.—Have you wounded the vow of *Poverty* by giving, receiving, or lending anything without permission ; by suffering anything to become spoilt or wasted that belonged to your office, or was in your use ; by keeping anything hidden against the will of Superiors ; by becoming too much attached to the things you are permitted to use, such as clothes, rooms, books, &c. ; by losing time that ought to be consecrated to work ; by wasting precious moments in talking, or in frivolous occupations, or simply in doing nothing and giving way to laziness ?

As regards the vow of *Chastity*, see whether you have sinned by thought, by word, or by deed. All sins committed against the sixth commandment wound equally the vow. Have you in temptations against purity sought to overcome them by the means given you by your Superior or your confessor, have you been careful to avoid the occasions and the idleness which lead to them, have you invoked the help of the most holy Virgin ? Have you, when the temptation has been very strong, opened your heart to him to whom you ought to have gone, and without loss of time ? Have you in this state of trouble remained in perplexity and in doubt without seeking remedy ? Have you guarded well the gates of your senses in order to preserve them from any irregularity ? Have you omitted the penances enjoined on you ?

With respect to *Obedience*, ask yourself if you have failed in doing what you have been told to do, or

have resisted the will of a Superior, either by speaking to him without sufficient respect, or by bringing forward excuses for not obeying, or by obeying lazily, slowly, and with unwillingness, or perhaps by not submitting your judgment to his, or even by speaking ill of any one?

In respect of spiritual exercises, have you been unfaithful in leaving out your prayer, or part of it, in performing it with voluntary distractions, in preparing the points carelessly or sleeping while they were given. Perhaps also through immortification you have taken a position neither becoming, nor likely to prevent sleep, or have neglected to make a short review after meditation that you might store up its fruit more carefully in your mind?

Perhaps you have omitted hearing Mass, or have heard it with distractions caused by either sleeping or talking. You may have neglected the examens each day, or have made them hurriedly without sorrow for your faults, without resolution to correct yourself, omitting especially your particular examen, changing its subject without leave from your confessor or Superior, leaving out an exact note of your defects, and passing over the other additions. You may have been negligent in drawing some fruit from spiritual reading, from the beads, from visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and other devotions. You have perhaps despised or turned aside from good and holy inspirations, have regarded light faults with indifference. Lastly, in what dispositions have you approached the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, what graces have you obtained from them?

Against your Neighbour.—Ask yourself whether you have despised him, or lessened his reputation, or have entertained any aversion especially towards Superiors, or have manifested this feeling. Whether you have suspected others without reason, and formed rash judgments ; whether you have been curious to know and examine into the conduct of others without sufficient motive, have envied the good of another, either temporal or spiritual, or perhaps have rejoiced over his misfortune. Whether you have been the cause of impatience in others, have actually desired harm to them, or any kind of cross and suffering? Have you formed any particular friendship for, or, on the other hand, dislike against a brother, for this were both to cause injury and give bad example? Have you addressed to others either mocking, stinging, or hard words wounding charity, or rough jokes and cutting remarks, or have preserved sometimes as unkind a silence? In discussion have you disputed with reason or without reason, have you fanned the flame when you saw any quarrel begun amongst your brothers, have you actually sown discord and bad feeling? Have you ever told a light or grievous falsehood about the faults of others, or disclosed those which were not known? Have you during recreation given bad example by never speaking of God, but often of useless subjects unbecoming a religious? Have you known of the strong temptation of a brother, or any serious fault on his part requiring correction, and have not told the Superior? Have you been in any degree the cause of another's neglect of any one of the rules?

Against Yourself.—Examine if you have observed the rules of modesty and of proper external behaviour, or if you have done this chiefly to gain the notice and esteem of men ; if you have encouraged vain thoughts of yourself, and of what you have done ; if you have been wanting in patience and gentleness ; if you have broken silence, principally in times and places where the rules especially require it ; if you have eaten or drunk out of meal hours, and without permission ; if you have eaten with excess, or too much avidity, or feelings of gluttony, or have asked for or tried to get any particular kind of food without necessity ; if you have given signs either of over-tenderness or of discontent when told of your faults, and if these feelings have lasted long, or if you have not shown a good will to learn the duties of your particular employment.

In the rules drawn up for your office, as well as in the common rules, you can still further examine yourself, and thus prepare for confession, though I would have you do this with prudence. Your object must not be to refine or listen to scruples, in which respect sometimes the better is the enemy of the good, and the devil, who cannot easily win over the religious soul to commit mortal sin, seeks every opportunity of involving it in scruples, and thus bringing it down to a less perfect state.

4. An examen well made will supply you with points sufficient to make your confession complete, and this is one of the necessary parts of the sacrament ; but, as it is not enough to know whereabouts the worm lies that is eating into the tree, if we would save the tree itself, unless we proceed to

crush it and drive it out of its hiding-place without leaving a trace behind, so must we through contrition extirpate from our soul the faults which we have discovered by our self-examination, and this gives to our confession the second necessary quality of sorrow.

It is not my intention to explain here that which you must certainly already know well, the nature of contrition, its object, its motives, and the good intention for the future which should accompany it, that your confession may be good and abundant in fruit. I would simply advise you to take up, and to carry out to the very hour of your death, the habit of paying great attention always to these two points—sorrow for sin, and a good intention for the future before approaching the feet of the confessor. Faithfulness to this practice will preserve you from scruples and from useless fears, and it will prove to you the source of peace and tranquillity.

Be very careful to begin by exciting yourself to contrition, do not content yourself with simple attrition. This is no difficulty for a soul which by its state, and by the grace of its vocation, lives in the continual exercise of charity. What do I say? It will be very easy for you if you take up the habit of casting your eye every day over your past life, full as it is of mortal sins, before making your act of contrition. You will thus apply your sorrow to all these sins, and to some one sin in particular which you will accuse yourself of afterwards at the end of your confession, this one alone, for it is not necessary for you to mention others. In this manner you will be much more secure that your confession is full

of sorrow and complete on all points, for it is next to impossible that a religious soul confesses without sufficient contrition, when she brings before the sacred tribunal these grave sins which are continually for her a source of grief, even though they have been already pardoned.

By this means you will feel also sure of forming a good resolution. For, as our sorrow may easily be deficient in sincerity when we are contented to accuse ourselves only of ordinary and venial sins, so there is danger of our good resolution being deficient in force and efficacy, if we neglect to apply it to the faults of the past life and to any particular sin which causes especial regret, as we have just explained. Cherish this advice well in your heart, my dear brother, put it in practice, and I shall be greatly astonished if you do not some day thank me much, seeing that to preserve a constant abhorrence of sin is the very basis of Christian perfection.

This, however, in no way prevents the true love of God from placing you above the need of other motives for contrition, and for a good and fruitful resolution, and for full respect to the sacrament, notwithstanding the faults and infidelities which may soil and disfigure your soul in the eyes of God—a God of infinite purity. My object in suggesting this practice to you was to insure greater safety, and because I have met several persons who, through ignorance of it, were kept always uneasy about their ordinary confessions, nay, even overwhelmed with remorse, and from such anxiety I was anxious to preserve you.

I am well aware also that many fervent souls

preserve themselves wholly from this danger by avoiding any familiar thoughts as to confession, or any routine in its practice. They are constantly stirring up their faith and penetrating themselves yet more tenderly with the motives which urge to the love of a God of beauty, of infinite goodness, who loves them infinitely, and they try to measure with this line the abyss of deformity and malice, to be found within the shadows of even a light fault. With such sentiments these souls have more than is necessary for confessing with lively sorrow and a perfect resolution, they direct their aim wholly against all the inclinations of their weak nature ; they detect all the bitter fruits in it, and they make it the special matter and object of their contrition, of their resolutions, and their accusation ; they ask for, and apply the remedy to the evil, and for them the tribunal of Penance is really what the Probatic pool of the Gospel was to those who had the happiness to plunge themselves into it.

Heaven grant that it may do the same for you, my brother ! Mark what the Saints have thought on this subject, and try to think and act as they have done. St. Achard, abbot of a monastery containing nine hundred religious who lived like angels in human shape, received a revelation that one half of his brothers would die within three days, and that their souls would go to heaven. He accepted this revelation as true beyond a doubt, and so lost no time in dreaming. He went to warn his children, he persuaded them to make humble and sorrowful confession of their sins. All made their confession, in the

midst of tears and sobs, and then they went forth to receive their crown of glory.

5. If your confession must be attended with sorrow it must also be *courageous*, that is to say, if there be a sin more shameful than another, one which through the malice of the devil you feel especial shame and fear at the thought of telling, a sin which makes you blush, and which it seems impossible for you to mention, you should commence at once with that one; remembering, what you yourself doubtless have expressed more than once to others, that it is inconceivable folly to allow oneself to be deterred by shame when it is necessary to show one's wounds to the physician, who certainly must have already seen more repulsive ones than yours. With a view to this, Father Paul Filagia, of our Society, said that he was never so content as when he saw a penitent gain this victory and accuse himself of some shameful sin, it appeared to him as though he saw a beautiful St. Michael treading under foot some hideous demon.

6. Besides this, confession should be *humble*, for he who comprehends even a little the greatness of God, and who is conscious of having sinned, and knows the happiness of repenting of it, is in no danger of proudly raising his head, but will imitate the example of the prodigal son when he came back to the right way. Do not conceal then your faults, do not change their nature, do not seek to excuse them, on the contrary try to excuse every one else in order to accuse yourself the more completely. Such is the portrait which the Holy Spirit Himself has given us of the just or humble man, for these two characters are the same.

And observe well, that to make a confession really humble neither carefully chosen words are requisite, nor those unusual attitudes of the body into which some persons put themselves. All such practices in the exterior are the result of previous education, but they are not according to the practice of the Society. Our custom is to avoid everything which is not according to the spirit and the example of our early fathers. As regards the exterior, be like other persons; as regards the interior, be like no other, understand well, *like no other*. On this point I will say no more, for to him who can understand a few words are enough.

7. In fine, if your confession is full of grief, we may be sure, for that very reason, it will be short. This is the last quality of it I shall touch on, and it is one of the most important, because a sincere sorrow for having offended God, and a confession full of endless histories, descriptions, and idle tales can never be found together. It is evident, however, that this shortness of one's confession must depend on certain circumstances. He who is making a general confession for a brief period of time can give to it a little more time than an ordinary confession would take, but we must not cut ourselves so short as to run the danger of want of clearness in declaring our faults, and in telling the circumstances necessary or useful for us to mention. But still, short and briefly expressed confessions are an excellent sign in a community that our time is well occupied, that we are going straight forward, and are not committing many sins. I have already remarked in more than four

religious houses how much admiration and envy had been expressed at the rapidity with which confessions are heard in the Society, and in other communities directed according to the same spirit. Let us return thanks to God, and try to preserve this good custom. If, however, sometimes, and even oftener, our heart stands in need of consolation and the renewal of its strength, if our soul requires more light and counsel, we must not stand upon ceremony, but seek these by knocking at the door of our Superior or confessor, who will always be pleased to hear what we have to tell him if we avoid unreasonable length.

Such are the points of advice which I have to give you with respect to your confession. I hope that in following these you will find what Jesus Christ wished to leave you in the weary desert of this life, namely, pardon and reconciliation, peace of conscience, increase of grace in your hearts, and the good hope of a holy death. Had it been my object to write a book of devotion for our lay-brothers, I would naturally have inserted here some prayers to be said before and after confession. But on this subject I have two observations to make. In the first place, I have introduced no devotions because these you already have, both good and excellent, in those pious exercises and books which you use. In the next place, I would advise you to make choice of short prayers, and those always the same, such, for example, as you have found by experience to touch your hearts and strengthen your fervour, using them before as well as after your confession, to thank God for

a benefit so great that you ought never to forget it. Say also in good time the penance set you, as soon indeed after confession as possible, for fear of its escaping your memory.

As to the examen, and the other acts of preparation for this sacrament, I would say that, for one who regularly frequents the sacraments, a short quarter of an hour well employed ought to be sufficient. You will not even require so long if you have been faithful in making the two daily examens, and the general and particular examen, according to the rule.

But I myself must here avoid two dangers ; the first of being too long, and so making this book more than a simple manual, the other of dwelling unnecessarily on that which our father, St. Ignatius, has explained clearly in the book of the Exercises, and which you have already acquired by habit in the noviceship, or have read in Rodriguez. These considerations alone have prevented my inserting in this place an instruction on so holy and essential a practice as the particular examen, one which, along with the two others of daily meditation and the annual retreat, preserves and increases the brightness of those solid and perfect virtues that, thanks to the Divine mercy, are the heritage of the Society.

Article II.—Holy Communion.

If it cannot be denied that the greatest, the richest, and the most precious graces demand, at the hands of him who wishes to receive them, the very best and most

excellent preparation, then the Divine Eucharist, being that most marvellous treasure which our Lord in His goodness has willed to bestow on you, giving Himself to you without division and without reserve, evidently requires from you a preparation very especial and very careful. Such preparation can never be in real proportion to the gift itself, but it will be quite sufficient to prove to an infinitely good God the full extent of your gratitude, and will preserve you from those chastisements which ungrateful hearts bring on themselves.

If ingratitude goes to the disgraceful extreme of communicating unworthily and in the state of mortal sin, of receiving into the same abode our Divine Benefactor and His sworn enemy, this is to receive into ourselves our own judgment and condemnation, to receive death itself. But, without carrying ingratitude to this excess, there are many Communions which well deserve the chastisements of heaven, and I doubt not that a large number of souls will lose God for ever, and will have caused little by little their eternal ruin, by receiving Communion with little preparation or else with much lukewarmness.

He is not a God of vengeance, but He is wounded to the very heart by the ingratitude and disregard with which His gifts are received. He is wounded to see that where He has chosen in some sort to make lavish display of the riches of His love, and to pour forth into our hearts every treasure of His own Heart, there as to this very mystery man protests and practically boasts of being able to do without it, and

with a senseless, unfeeling indifference does his best to extinguish this furnace of Divine love, that would fain be always setting souls on fire.

Re-awaken then your faith, O my brother, and try to receive Holy Communion as often as possible, prepare yourself for it with as much devotion, as much love and holy enthusiasm as though you were about to receive it for the first, or for the last time in your life.

We are taught to make two different preparations, one remote, the other proximate, each of which has its importance. The first of these consists in guarding as carefully as possible purity and innocence of heart, in purifying the soul from all stains of sin through the Sacrament of Penance, for this is absolutely necessary before approaching the holy altar, if any mortal sin has been committed. Just souls, who do not feel that they have been guilty of any grievous sin, make acts of virtue as their remote preparation, for they know that these dispose and render them more worthy to sit down at the divine banquet. Thus St. Mary of Hungary fasted on bread and water on the eve of her Communion. St. Aloysius devoted three days to his preparation, consecrating the first in honour of the Eternal Father, the second in honour of the Son of God, and the third in honour of the Holy Spirit.

It is not very difficult to imitate the Saint in this, but if you find it too difficult for you as yet, and are unwilling to commence it through fear of soon giving it up, strive to be at least a little more than usually recollected on the day which precedes that of your Communion. Perform all the duties of your office

with especial care, and your exercises of piety with particular fervour, add some little mortification, an additional visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the reading of some good book on Communion, and if possible make your morning's meditation on the Holy Eucharist. If you penetrate your mind deeply with the thought of the infinite goodness of your God, and if in return you are willing to give to Him your heart with all its tenderest feelings, or what is the same thing if you love Him truly, all the rules that could be recommended to you, as serving for direction in the proximate preparation, would be almost useless, true love has no need of them. And yet, in case this love has become somewhat cold in your heart, I would wish to open out before you the bright path which the Saints have followed that they might attain to God, and I would ask you to adopt those holy and pious exercises which they themselves practised.

1. Commence by exciting within yourself an ardent desire for this bread of angels. Ah, if you could only hunger after it as did St. Catharine of Sienna, when she suffered terribly on being deprived of it. Blessed Alphonsus, too, was so consumed with the same desire that he constantly made acts of spiritual communion.

2. Frequently fill your mind with profound humility at the sight of what you are, vile dust, a worm of the earth, corruption and sin. And it is Jesus, God Himself, who deigns to come down and seek to dwell within your breast. This thought sufficed to touch St. Francis Borgia, and ravish him into ecstasy.

3. Again, make acts of faith, hope, and charity; you could scarcely choose a better time for repeating them

with fervour and with fruit. Beseech also your angel guardian to offer them up to the holy Virgin, in order that, passing through her most blessed hands, they may mount upward to the very Heart of Jesus. St. Angela of Mericia, in her familiar intercourse with her angel guardian, laid this charge upon him.

4. Keep always fresh in your memory the names of those whom you wish to recommend very particularly in your Communion—your Superiors, your brothers in religious profession, your near relations and those more distant, your friends, benefactors, and enemies, the entire Church, the Society, &c., ask for them and for yourself all graces and favours from heaven. Pray with confidence and importunity, assured of receiving much when the Lord and King of the universe shall come to you, visiting you and giving Himself to you, whereas the kings of this world give not even a small pittance from their hand to their subjects. What do you think Blessed Mary of St. Bennet, a Dominicaness, asked of Jesus every time that she went to Communion? It was that she might obtain the favour of dying immediately after receiving Communion; with how great care and fervour then must she not have prepared herself each time!

5. At the very moment when you are approaching the altar stir up your faith as much as possible, as much as you would if you were suddenly to see Jesus coming and entering into your home, robed in great beauty and glory. You would cast yourself at His feet to kiss them and to adore before Him, and you would tell Him, at least with the aspirations of your

heart, if emotions of joy stopped your utterance, the strong desire that you felt to love and serve Him, and to prefer Him always to every creature beyond comparison ; and you would beseech Him to bless you, as pledging Himself to grant what you desire and what you have set your hopes upon for the rest of your life, namely, to be amongst the number of His elect. Now you must offer up this same prayer to Him as soon as you see the sacred Host in the hand of the Priest. A thousand times blessed are you, my brother, if you receive the benediction which the Blessed Sister Charity, of the Order of Dominicans, saw those of her community receive, who had communicated that day in their church.

While you receive the Blessed Sacrament, million angels gather round you envying your happy lot, they adore in silence the Divine Creator and Redeemer of a soul made thus noble and happy. And you also should recollect yourself for a few moments, closing the eyes of your body that you may open those of your soul, all absorbed in and surrounded by flames of love, and may fix your glance on that Divine Sun, who will allow you thus to look on Him, as the eagle, the king of the air, gazes unflinchingly on the sun in the heavens.

And then, like one just awaking out of a delicious trance, and seeing by his side the object of his love, say to Him—and yet what words can I suggest to you—if you in truth love Him, tell Him what you can, and all that you tell Him will be well and fitly said. I would only remind you that whenever you stand in need of a particular favour, the quarter of an hour after Communion is one of the most favour-

able moments for earnest prayer. And see you never give less than this quarter of an hour to your thanksgiving, lest you should appear discourteous and ungrateful in the eyes of your very Saviour Himself. Such was the thought of S. Teresa, such should be yours also. Prolong this time as much as you can, and when you cannot do that, see at least that you do not lose one single moment of it.

How did your holy brother, Alphonsus Rodriguez, employ the precious moments of thanksgiving? He retired into a corner of the sanctuary, and in profound recollection regarded his heart as an immense hall, in the midst of which he saw seated on a throne on one side Jesus, and on the other Mary. He then repeated three times the *Gloria Patri*, and immediately commenced the *Te Deum*, repeating it down to the words: "Heaven and earth are full," &c.; at these words he invited all creatures, and particularly the angels and saints, to come and thank God, and chant His praises for the favours accorded to him, then he saw himself in spirit surrounded by the angels of heaven, who adored this King so full of power concealed within the sacrament of His love. At this instant he generally felt in his soul such transports of divine tenderness, that in order to give some idea of it he has thus described it in his notes: "Then the understanding fails to grasp, words are too weak to express the delights with which the soul is filled, in the midst of this immense multitude of celestial spirits all serving, adoring, and blessing their God within the heart of a poor mortal man."

I am not writing a book of devotion, and so cannot

add any little collection of prayers or acts for this solemn moment. Not that I blame those who make use of some such book, and seek thus to draw profit from what others have felt and thought in their Holy Communion. But if you find yourself without any book, you can make trial of a method which I will explain and recommend as being easy to keep in your mind.

You have but to remember this one Latin word *ardor* (ardour), each letter of which forms the first or initial letter of five words, that name the five acts you have to offer up to our Lord Jesus Christ, during this blessed quarter of an hour of His special graces. These five words are AFFECTION, RECOLLECTION, DEMAND, OFFERING, and RECOMMENDATION. A help such as this to the memory is very easy, it well suits the meaning of the word *ardor*, and is natural to our subject.

1. AFFECTION. Love Jesus! Spend some minutes with Him in pouring forth sighs and acts of love. Tell Him that from henceforth you wish not to love any one but Him, and that the only regret you feel is that you have not as many hearts as there are creatures, to give all to Him. Beg of Him to grant you either His love, or else death. Beseech the Blessed Virgin, the angels, the seraphim, and all the saints who have most loved Jesus, to lend you their hearts to love Him with, as they have loved Him.

2. RECOLLECTION. Fathom, if you can, the depths of the Divine goodness and liberality towards you, and His inconceivable blessings, both general

and particular, but above all His having pardoned you so often, and His having sealed His reconciliation by giving you so wonderful a pledge of love in this gift from heaven. Thank Him, and assure Him that were you consumed a thousand times in most terrible fires, you could not even then render to God what you owe Him for so great mercy. Return Him the most ardent acknowledgment you can, give up your heart to Him without reserve, for that is all which He desires.

3. DEMAND. Behold the hour of prayer for yourself and for others, but you must before all, as the first favour, beg the grace of graces—perseverance in the Society; and to that end, pray that you may advance in perfection, and make progress in that especial virtue which is most necessary for you. Do not be afraid of asking too much from God, for He never wearies of bestowing.

4. OFFERING. Offer to God your thoughts, your feelings, your desires, your soul with its faculties, your body with its senses, all that you have, and all that you hope for, everything which you love, and everything that you can do. You owe Him all, and you should offer up all to Him, in order that He may also Himself offer up all to His Heavenly Father, giving it along with His own Blood in exchange for the gift bestowed on you, of the Father's only and best beloved Son, and of so many graces with Him. If you wish to have a form of oblation worthy of this act, of this perfect offering, you find it in your vows which you might well renew at this time, as an offering that is of more value, and contains more

substance in it than twenty other prayers of devotion which you might say. In addition to this, and before everything else, you should love to repeat with extreme fervour the formula of oblation which our holy father S. Ignatius has left us in one of the colloquies of his Exercises ; it will have for you a peculiar charm, an exquisite sweetness : “Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will, everything which I have, everything which I possess ; it is you who have given them to me ; to you, O my God, do I give them up, all are yours. Dispose of them as you will, give to me only your love and your grace, and I shall be rich indeed. I ask for nothing more.”

When renewing your vows, you will perhaps find your devotion increased by using the form of Brother Alphonsus. He was accustomed to recite it every day at the moment of the Elevation, and you may, if you like, either adopt it as your act of thanksgiving, or use it at some other time if you find it too long. The form which he used is as follows—

“O Eternal Father, my Lord and my God, how many times have I offered up to you this my promise and my vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, according to the institute of the Society ! I beseech you, God of all goodness, Father of mercies, to pardon all the faults which I have committed against holy obedience and the perfect accomplishment of your most holy will. Grant me the grace to serve you with more perfect fidelity, to seek in everything your greater glory, and to please you in all things as I desire to do, and as I am bound in all justice to do. And

now, once again, in presence of your Divine Majesty, and of the most holy Virgin Mary, my Queen and my Mother, and of all heaven, I renew my vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, according to the constitutions of the Society of Jesus, your Son. I beseech, O Lord, that as you have given me the grace to make this promise, and to offer you this sacrifice of myself, so you will grant me the favour of being able to fulfil it perfectly. I implore you as earnestly, if this offering is at all agreeable to the eyes of your Divine Majesty, to deign to receive it as my act of thanksgiving to you for having drawn me from the world and called me to religion in your holy Society, to which you know I am so happy and so content to belong. This alone is so great a blessing for me, that if all the men in the world wished to search out, or to plan the greatest good possible for my soul and for my body, not only could they never find a better, but they could never even approach to the preciousness of that grace which you have bestowed on me in my vocation. What then, O my God, so good and so great a Benefactor to me, what can I do? After such graces, where is my love, my true love for you? Where are the services I have rendered to you, in return for having received so much from you? Where is that full gratitude I owe for so many favours conferred in such goodness, and which I am still every day receiving!"

After repeating these last words the holy brother generally remained silent, as though overwhelmed in the ocean of Divine grace, as though struck dumb at the sight of his own misery; and he betook himself

to the Blood of Jesus Christ, that through it he might thank God for the grace of having been called into the Society.

Father Laynez used a much shorter form for renewing his vows. He said in two words : *What I have promised pleases me, I confirm my promises.* And it will be well for you to express it in the same few words, when you have not much time, "O Lord, what I have said, I have said.

5. RECOMMENDATION. As the last act, make to the Heart of Jesus, which is so near to your heart, strong and ardent recommendation of all those whom you love most, and all those objects which interest you most in this world.

If the time is short, place all these persons and objects in the five adorable Wounds of Jesus, inclose them all within the sacred symbols, cast them at least into the wound of His Heart, and beg of Him, after you have done this, that it may only remain for you to thank Him that He has heard your prayers for the Church, and for its Head, for those who govern, for those to whom you owe gratitude and love, and particularly for poor sinners who actually wish not to know God, in order that they may the more determinately live on in sin, or who knowing Him crucify Him in their hearts.

You will, in fine, end well this quarter of an hour's thanksgiving, by repeating with devotion the sacred hymn in which the Church herself thanks her Divine Spouse for all the benefits she has received from Him. If you do not know the *Te Deum*, or have no book containing it at hand, you can finish either with the

prayer, *Anima Christi*, or with an *Our Father* and *Hail Mary*. Nothing is left now, my good brother, than to prove to all those who may observe you, that you have not received Holy Communion in vain; and, though you should do nothing for the purpose of being noticed by others, but only that you may please God, it is well that all should bless Him in observing you pass the day with more than usual modesty, recollection, and silence, and in the performance of some particular acts of virtue. For, as we are not astonished to find that the dress of one who has passed several hours in a beautiful garden retains somewhat of the perfume of the flowers, so we shall feel it quite natural that on the day of your Communion you also should retain the perfume of a thousand virtues, of patience, for example, receiving in silence any disagreeable remark which one of your brothers may make to you; of humility, in bearing it with all contentment should a Superior chide you for some fault really committed by another; of charity, in receiving from the hand of another some particular work that we may aid and comfort him by doing it in his stead; in a word, the perfume of all these virtues of which Jesus gives to your soul in this sacrament the most perfect example, as He will be Himself hereafter, if you receive Him worthily and frequently, your eternal crown and your recompense in His glory—a grace which I most earnestly desire for you.

THIRD PART.

The especial virtues of lay-brothers in the fulfilment of their offices or employments.

It will be of little service to our brothers merely to take up the cassock or wear the livery of religion, for it is not the habit that makes the monk; it is not even enough for them to know the grace and the blessedness of their state, for hell is full of men who have had a good head and a clear view of the things of God. But, as there is not in hell one single person of good will, that precisely which is important for you is to see that you have this good will, and to conform your life to that which your holy vocation commands of you.

Every religious, having made profession of a state of perfection, is bound according to the doctrine of St. Thomas to be holy in his life, and must force himself to acquire that which he proposed to himself in making his vows. But as in the human race there is but one nature and yet an infinite variety of character, of figure, of personal features, and of other accidental qualities; so it is in religion, all should be saints, but with certain varieties, the sanctity of Superiors differing in many points from that of

inferiors. There are differences between the sanctity of a professor and the sanctity of a missionary ; the sanctity of a Priest, and that again of a lay-brother. This special character is impressed on each one by the rules of his office, according to the grade which he occupies, and the particular work to which he is appointed in the Society. And if he observes these rules perfectly he will attain the end proposed by our holy Founder, who with profound wisdom has appointed that there should be these different classes in his Order.

As regards you, my dear brother, the only difference which distinguishes you from others, consists in the collection of rules which belongs to your degree ; if you observe all of them well, as I have already said, you will be good lay-brothers, that is both good and deserving of the full respect and affection of the Society, the mother of us all. You will be that which our holy Father proposed to make you, according to the very terms which he employs in his Constitutions, men of a right conscience, self-possessed, docile, loving virtue and perfection, inclined to devotion, giving good edification to all, both within and without, content with the lot of Martha in the Society, attached to the Institute, and desirous of carrying it out to the glory of our Lord.

But can you be all this simply by following your common rules ? No, assuredly. For how can he be a good soldier who knows, however well, only the theory of his profession, even though he observes that perfectly, and yet neglects the special drill in the management of his weapon, and has entirely for-

gotten the regulations of his special rank in the army, whether of common soldier or corporal, brigadier or sergeant. So you could never be good brothers and holy religious if you were not faithful to any except the rules common to all the members of the Society, or even to the rules of all the lay-brothers, and were to apply no care or energy to observing those specially drawn up for your own particular office. It is certain that if you neglect these you are sinning against the general and common rules, for you know well that amongst them, forming the last of the common rules, is that one which obliges you to read the rules of your office once a week. Now you cannot be faithful to this rule if you do not carry it out according to its true spirit, for it recalls the rules of your office so often to your memory, evidently in order to insure the most ready, the most perfect, and the most constant observance.

It is to this end that I propose to review, along with you, the rules of the principal offices intrusted to you, enabling you to see the chief virtues belonging to each employment, suggesting at the same time certain practices and useful points of advice, which may help to sanctify you, and to direct everything in perfect harmony with the special rules of your various duties.

OFFICE OF BROTHER SACRISTAN.

One may say of you with reason, my dear brother, that you are like the angel of the Testament, because you have always our Lord before you, and are constantly employed in the house consecrated to His service. This consideration ought to unite you very closely to Him in the practice of every religious virtue. But there are four virtues in particular which should sanctify your soul—namely, faith, humility, modesty, and piety or devotion. These virtues are taught by the careful practice of the twenty-four rules of your office, which the Society has given you for your guidance.

Your faith should be very strong and lively, because having continually in your hands things holy and consecrated to God, without the true spirit of faith you would soon become too familiar with these objects, and would treat them as common and ordinary, to the injury both of the Divine glory and your own good.

That you may strengthen your faith, be careful to carry out the following points. Each time you touch the sacred vessels remember that they belong to God. Salute with respect the pictures and figures of Jesus Christ, of the holy Virgin, and of the Saints, calling to mind the especial favours and graces which through them the Saints themselves, who are represented by them, are ready to grant to those who invoke them.

Be still more careful to renew often your acts of

faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament; address to Him fervent ejaculatory prayers every time you pass before the tabernacle. Give a few moments, though brief, from your occupations that you may converse sweetly with Him at the foot of His altar, and pray Him to receive your heart and your love; for this you can do very often, and yet find time for everything.

The sure result of such lively faith will be that order, perfect neatness, and cleanliness will always shine forth in the holy place intrusted to your charge, and will prove the faithful observance of your rules. Brother Jerome Winter called the sacristy his garden, and he worked so diligently to make everything clean and bright and well arranged, that he never asked to go out of the house.

You will, in the next place, practice humility in different ways—

1. By looking upon yourself as unworthy of the angelic office of being engaged in the house of God, and so near His Divine Majesty. Give yourself up with fervour to the lowest and most humble work, that at least which appears such, for no work is really humbling that is done in the palace of God our King. Sweep, dust, remove cobwebs, wash the altars thoroughly, prepare the lamps in good time. St. Francis of Paul, while General of his Order, did all these things with admirable zeal; the Emperor Constantine also has left us a beautiful example, digging up the earth with his own hands and carrying it to the place where he wished to build the Basilica of the Holy Apostles.

2. By obeying with exactitude and submission the directions of the Father Prefect of the church, acting in absolute dependence in everything which regards your office (rules 1, 15, 19), without the slightest murmuring or complaint that perhaps you have been ordered to do something too hard for you, or that there is too much to do.

3. By respecting and honouring the Priests, as the sixth rule commands all the brothers, but in a special way the sacristan, from the fact that he has more to do with them, in going to seek them at the hour of Mass, or when they are wanted in the confessional. At these times he must speak to them not in the tone of a superior who commands, but rather of an inferior who comes simply to remind them that the hour for their Mass will soon strike, or that some person wishes to go to confession to them; and he will then help them to vest with respectful care. He should serve Mass with attention and lively faith, and were the Priest to make any mistake, so far from implying fault, he should be content, if before God the matter seems to require it, merely to tell the prefect of the church, or the Superior, who will mention the point to him in charity, and thus prevent all unpleasant results. Should the brother sacristan be charged by the Superior with this duty of observation, let him call the notice of others with great modesty and reserve to the rule of silence, or to any other rule which he may observe to be disregarded in any marked way, or by repeated acts.

But above all, modesty ought to be your principal virtue, on account of the danger to which it is ex-

posed ; and if you are wanting in that, you will give but little edification to any one who may see you. Never speak in the church or in the sacristy except in a low tone of voice (rule 22). Move about slowly, repress all vain curiosity of the eyes, especially when you are speaking to females ; let your words to them be few, cutting short what they may say to you, for otherwise they will run on for ever. This, however, must never prevent your being civil, and even courteous along with modesty, so that every one may go away well satisfied with you. Nothing should be carried to excess, thus the vow which Brother Winter made of never looking at any female, and of never speaking to one either in the church or in the sacristy, is one of those things more to be admired than imitated.

Ask of God the grace to enable you to attain this true well-balanced practice of virtue, for without that everything will be made up of contradictions in your life. To be during the whole day and even part of the night in the church, and to work there incessantly in order that souls may raise themselves to God and be penetrated with devotion, and yet, by your own acts and your own inconsiderate words, to pass from one extreme to the other, and to find that you are not thinking at all of God, in fact, that you have little of the spirit of true piety, what a violation of the becoming order of things !

I believe that there is not a single brother sacristan who would not find it most useful to give, at several fixed times in the year, special attention to the rules of modesty, and to make those the points of his particular examen. By this means you will be

sure to edify others, and to avoid many unpleasant things for yourself, and indeed for your Superiors also. In the book called *Imâgo primi sæculi*, we are told of a brother who had been sacristan for thirty years in the college of Cordova, and had made himself liked by every one, and yet had never been seen to fix his look on a woman. Ah! the example of that brother was most worthy of imitation.

Devotion, or piety, is the last virtue I have named for your careful practice. And here there can be no excuse if you have not yet acquired it, nay, yours must be a tender and a fervent piety, for no one has greater means of attaining it, as you live in the very midst of holy things, like a fish surrounded by the water.

I will now show you how you can habituate yourself to make frequent acts of this virtue, but you must give me your best attention as I shall only indicate the way, and leave you to carry out what I consider you can do for yourself. I will not therefore burden you with a long list of practices or interior exercises, for these would only fatigue your head and hamper your action. Make trial for a little of each kind, and choose that which best suits you, taking counsel of one who can and ought to advise you; be resolved to give edification to all as long as you are sacristan, and do not leave this office without becoming more pious and more holy through the exercise of it; this is all that is required.

Everything which you see and touch is made in order to help you to devotion. The sight of so many religious persons who though living in the world leave everything, their houses and their affairs, to come to

the church, this might well rebuke your laziness and your little zeal in acknowledging the grace which God gives you of being nearer to Him, and of being able to enjoy His presence and converse with much less trouble to yourself. You might unite your prayers to those of the souls that are more fervent than your own, and ask God to listen to them through the merits of Jesus Christ His Son. You might draw consolation and strength from the august Sacrament of the Altar, of which the tabernacle is as it were the centre of repose for you, desiring earnestly to see the whole world on fire with the love, and consuming itself in the flames of the Sacred Heart. To this fire, to this furnace of infinite charity repeat often the short prayer—"Heart of Jesus, Victim of love, come, let us adore Thee."

You will find it a great help to devotion to kiss often the relics of the holy martyrs, which you must never do without profound respect, remembering the tears of love which St. Francis Borgia shed every time that he paid this reverence to them. Be careful never to place these relics in any place that is not extremely clean and becoming; on one occasion St. Hanno, Archbishop of Cologne, was struck by an invisible hand, because he had been wanting in the respect due to the bones and ashes of three of the sixty martyrs of Mauritania.

In preparing and decorating the altars there is nothing to prevent your reciting from time to time the acts of faith, hope, and charity? Whilst you are lighting the candles what difficulty again in your asking Jesus to make you worthy of burning and shining in His

divine presence? Or what is easier than to tell God, while you are filling the holy water stoups, a point to be well attended to, that you rejoice in the power which He has given to this blessed water, and so make at once a sign of the cross over your forehead and your heart with it, saying at the same time : " My God, I have sinned against Thee."

A very little faith will keep you from ever sinning against the sixth and ninth rule as regards the wine and water, and the hosts required for Mass ; but if you have a tender and sincere devotion you will do something more. You will always make these hosts yourself as though you were preparing a throne for God, and as for the water and the wine, you will see also to these yourself. St. Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, heard Mass every day, and satisfied his devotion by cutting the ears of corn and plucking the grapes which were to be employed for the altar.

As I have already said, you should assist the Priest with great respect when he vests for Mass, and in doing this you can remind yourself of the signification of the different parts of his vestments, a matter which you should learn both for your own use, and for explanation to others. If you are an attentive and pious sacristan you will never allow a Priest to leave the sacristy badly vested, this the fourth of your rules directs, and you will never permit those to serve Mass who are dirtily or untidily clothed, or children who are too young, or too giddy and blundering to be trusted. If you have charge over the altar servers, train them to behave like angels about the altar. You yourself must be careful to give them good example by observing

well the third of your rules, by serving as many Masses as you can, at each of which you should be ready to make a spiritual communion. It is, then, very important for you to have some good distinct methods for assisting at the Holy Sacrifice with devotion and fruit. You will find an admirable example of this zeal for serving not one only but many Masses, in the lives of the celebrated Francis Naranjo of Andalusia, and of Louis de Moralès, whom I have already mentioned. Both these sanctified themselves in the office of sacristan during several years, and you, like them, will become holy if you apply yourself faithfully to the practice of these four virtues.

You will in this way arrive at perfection, you will become so exact, so gentle, so obliging in everything which belongs to the service of God, that many will call you the pattern of a true religious, and this without laying a painful restraint on yourself; and it is far better that this should be said of you, than its opposite. They will feel also that Jesus Christ dwells with pleasure in the house which you have charge of, as He delights to dwell in the chapels of religious houses, where faith and piety arrange everything in such perfect order. And is not all this much better than deserving by your negligence to be set down, like so many others, in the list of slovenly and careless paid sacristans, whose example tends to destroy the faith and devotion of all who come near them. One might say that these are born only to make both religion and their office odious and despicable. But we have said enough surely to save you from the danger of incurring such an accusation.

OFFICE OF BROTHER PORTER.

The first person whom we meet on entering a religious house is the porter; and as on approaching a palace it is the front which strikes the eye, and if that be beautiful and well designed we decide that the magnificence of the whole building will be in keeping, so from the manner of behaviour of the porter, one may judge of the degree of virtue of the religious in the house of which he holds the key.

It is you, then, my dear brother, who are as the front of that house or college, a pattern of those who are within; on your countenance may be read its glory, or its shame. This reflection should be enough to make you very watchful over yourself, and very anxious to acquire all the virtues necessary in so responsible an office. These virtues are fidelity, diligence, prudence, charity; and on these depend many other qualities which you ought to treasure up. Your fidelity should in every trial be preserved untouched, incorruptible, inviolate; I mean that you should be incapable of being turned aside either by particular friendship, or by flattery, or by human respect, or, in a word, by any possible motive. The reason for this is clear, because you are the advanced sentinel of the Superior who has confided to you and placed within your hands, not one thing only in particular, as in the case of those who have other

employments, but the whole house. You ought to act there as his eyes and his ears for the preservation of domestic order; and if you are not faithful, disorder will find its way most assuredly into the whole community. See then clearly what it is you have to do, and do it.

Keep the door well closed, so that not any person, nor any thing, enters or leaves the house without the knowledge of the Superior (rules 1, 13, 14). Pay great attention to everything that is done at the door, which on no account whatever may be left unattended, especially when any of the opposite sex are present. Observe if they stay there for hours together, talking without any particular object, and mark if any member of the community be the cause of it by permitting too frequent visits, without paying the smallest attention to days or hours. Notice if any one receives often little presents or messages, and, if on points like these you remark any irregularity or excess, immediately inform the Superior. When in doubt whether you ought to mention the matter to him or not, always decide on doing it, and he will, according to his good judgment, determine if it is necessary for him to draw attention to what you have told him. It is better to expose yourself to the danger of annoying him by giving needless information, than to expose him to the danger of greater embarrassment by remaining silent and by trusting too much to your own judgment.

As regards letters, parcels, or anything else which is sent from the house, or which enters by the door, read over the third, ninth, and fifteenth of your rules ;

observe them well, for they contain the very perfection of the virtue of prudence.

In keeping the third rule, not a shadow of alteration or exception is allowed. I assure you there is not one word or syllable that may be omitted, and the very point which appears to you useless may very easily be the most important point of all, for example : that those to whom letters have been sent should not be told that they have been received. May God enlighten you and give you grace to be faithful in this matter, as the rule demands.

In every case listen to, and see that you understand the directions and remarks of the Superior concerning the observance of your rules, in particular the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh ; for they contain points that may vary according to times and circumstances, and thus you will avoid a number of errors, disappointments, and annoyances. Be not afraid that this character of inflexible fidelity will make you disliked, even by imperfect religious, should there be such ; as regards others, this fear cannot exist. At all events, have no hesitation in saying, when the opportunity calls for it : This is the order of Father Superior. For in truth it is exactly he who is charged with all this, and who has to render account to God, and to men even if they demand it, for whatever he may have ordered and regulated.

Let us come now to the duty of diligence. If you are to be faithful, like one of the cherubim intrusted with guard over the paradise of religion, you should be also like an angel, keen, active in receiving and

carrying, entering and leaving, going up and coming down the stairs, without ever being tired of serving and executing messages for the servants of God. But you must avoid ever letting the door remain unattended, as I have before urged, and it is to prevent this happening that another is appointed to help you.

The fifth rule requires you to go to the door when you hear the bell sound, not when it suits you, but with quickness and readiness, thus doubtless preventing many inconveniences which your slowness might cause both to those in the house and to those without. Patience in persons knocking at a gate, to which they would not have come at all without real business, is a quality very rare ; and if you exercise much the patience of those thus kept waiting, they will soon become discouraged, and will keep at a distance from the house, very possibly to the great disadvantage of the community. And then, who knows but amongst these impatient visitors, who oblige you to open and shut the door a hundred times, there may be some one who is exceedingly hurried, most anxious to obtain a confessor for a person who is perhaps dying ? Would you like to incur the terrible responsibility of having been the cause, by your slowness in opening, that he has not received that mercy in time ? In truth, were I in your place, I would not bring its weight upon me, nor even expose myself to the risk, though I were engaged at the time in prayer, or even rapt in an ecstasy.

The thirteenth rule obliges you also to bestow great care on keeping the porter's lodge and the neighbouring parlours very clean, and to see that no one

speaks in them with too loud a voice. Thanks to our good Father, if attention be only paid to these two points, the entrance into our houses will look neither from a distance, nor close at hand, like the door of a public-house or a barrack, where everyone leaves some filth behind, where no one has the charge of cleaning up, and where loud shouting is perpetually heard as though all the world were deaf. Be careful to put this advice in practice, for if the porter's lodge be not kept as a mirror of cleanliness and order, a kind of sanctuary in which silence is observed, the rule will not be obeyed and strangers will carry no lesson of edification home with them, which they have a full right to expect to find in our houses.

The diligence, which your last two rules recommend to you, is not without its importance. You may, perhaps, have distinctly felt it when, through forgetfulness of it for a single day, you have perchance caused some serious inconvenience to those in the infirmary, or have disturbed the order of the classes. How admirable was the exactness and punctuality of Brother John Baptist Mochi, who held the office of porter for nearly his whole life. Never could the first stroke of the clock find him unprepared, he already held the rope in his hand to give the signal by bell for each exercise at its hour, and while waiting he never failed to offer up acts of the love of God, and ejaculatory prayers. Another good example was given to you by Brother John de la Feure, who was constantly met hastening from one part of the house to another, that he might leave out no duty of his office, though he was crippled in both feet from

his birth; or again, Brother Rupert Lauchner, who went up and down stairs a hundred times a day to call the Fathers when wanted, because for several years he had no bell by which to give them notice.

You stand also in great need of prudence, for this virtue, like blessed salt, seasons everything. It may be that you do not yet possess it in its perfection, but be of good courage, and by the help of God's grace you will acquire it in the end, it will come as the fruit of your obedience. These points of advice will be of use to you.

Be always master of yourself as much as possible, that you may preserve an even character, and receive each one who knocks at the gate, however many there may be, with calmness, with charity and religious politeness, with an expression of countenance ever gentle and smiling, so that they may go away again contented and edified.

Believe me it is no small matter that I ask of you by this advice. But, on the other hand, I do not wish to bind you down never to give the slightest sign or gesture of sharpness, never to utter one word in a louder key than another, should any occasion require it as it were of you. What! did not Jesus, the gentle Lamb, take up a scourge to drive from the Temple those who profaned it, did He not cast to the ground what was being sold there? Prudence will teach you when and where you should raise the stick, aim the sharp word, or a rough *Be off with you*, to the rude street boys, or to ignorant and insolent persons.

Speak but little. Remember that the man who speaks much falls into many mistakes. That house

which has for its porter a carrier about of news, a babbler with a long tongue, is like a kettle without its lid, or like a field of weeds.

The world outside learns from him all that has been done or is about to be done in the community; while those within acquire through him all the vain and idle rumours of the world. Unhappy for the religious house where this happens, for where formerly the Spirit of God reigned supreme, there all will soon become abandoned and lost, nor leave one remnant of the past behind.

It is not enough to speak but little, this little must also be good and edifying, or of things absolutely necessary, especially when you are addressing those of the opposite sex. Your twelfth rule instructs you how you should conduct yourself towards these. Your saintly protector, Alphonsus Rodriguez, will teach you in what way and on what subjects you should speak whilst you hold the office of porter; as also will that other brother of the same name, Alphonsus de la Vallée, porter at Coimbra, whose virtues were so attractive to the scholars of our classes, that they vied with one another in their eagerness to visit him and hear him speak of God.

In the last place, you must be charitable—full of charity. Bear well in mind how the twelfth rule bids you treat the poor with very great kindness, inquiring of the Superior what you may give and distribute to them, because after all you are a religious. If you have but little to give, enrich it at least with the gift of sweetness, as did once that famous captain, who, being utterly unable to give out pay to his

soldiers, addressed to them a few words full of affection instead ; saying that he was always bound to bestow something on them, either money or good advice, and that having no money left to give them, he had always some kind words at least, and with these his soldiers retired well content. It is the same case also with the poor, even when you cannot give them anything, provided only you avoid giving them sour looks, or speaking to them with contempt ; in which way surely you would not speak to Jesus Christ, of whom the poor man is an image in the eyes of true faith. No doubt many of these people are importunate and rude, and it will happen that a few are not ashamed to be bold, and to threaten violence in reply to such gentle words as these : Excuse me, good man, I have nothing for you to-day, or : May God help you.

But what would you have me tell you ? Surely you will not lose your temper towards a troublesome beggar, even if he be impudent and pertinacious, especially if you have ever shared in the experience of the two religious of the Order of St. Dominic, to whom, while carrying bread to the monastery, two poor men presented themselves with rude voice and gesture demanding alms, when it was by express revelation told them, that these were two angels whom our Lord directed to act in this manner, in order to put the patience, gentleness, and charity of the two brothers to the proof. Now what happened once may easily be repeated a hundred times, and, whether it occur or not, you should reflect that when a poor man is very persevering in begging, God Himself

permits it in order to give you an opportunity of practising the virtue of charity, which is gentle, patient, and long-suffering, and when occasion serves renders good for evil.

Lose not one of these chances of doing all the good that you can to the poor of God, good both spiritual and corporal. While not exceeding the limits that the Superior has appointed for you, on the other hand, do not fail to tell him of the sufferings you are witness to or hear of, through fear of the poor quarrelling with you, or of costing the house too much. Most probably the Superior has, long before you, read these words of the Gospel : *Give, and it shall be given to you*, and has found out by experience that he who gives to the poor lends to the Lord, and by doing this secures both enough to feed his own household and something to spare for others.

There are porters who have always something to give, while others never have anything ; and instead of seeking the cause in the poverty of the house, or in the hardness of the Superior, these would do well to acknowledge, what is the simple truth, that their own laziness is at fault, which prevents their going to ask for what is necessary, or that they are wanting in the pure gold of charity, which is always ingenious to find something to give. It would be unpardonable if he gave what was useless or of no value, for poor people are, after all, men, they have a soul as you have, nay, perhaps a soul much more beautiful in the eyes of God than yours is. This charity was for many years practised in an admirable degree by

Brother Francis, an Irishman, porter in the seminary of Manilla, who daily with the permission of the Superior distributed food to a dozen poor men, in honour of the twelve Apostles.

Act as I have advised you, my brother, and on the part of God I promise you that you will not find it without benefit to you when you come to die. You will guard the keys of the gate as Brother Rodriguez did, whose life I wish you to study continually. He had good imitators in the two brothers, Blanco Statella, porter at Catania in Sicily, who when in the world was equerry to Charles V., and Brother John of Aragon, descended from a very distinguished family, who through humility, after he had served in the army with distinction, joined our Society as lay-brother and filled the office of porter for fourteen years.

OFFICE OF BROTHER INFIRMARIAN.

The brother infirmarian, in a religious house, can form some idea of the importance of his office, if he reflects on the almost infinite number of maladies to which human flesh is heir, and, on the other hand, that on him may depend the result, more or less happy, of the maladies confided to his care. The Saints have undertaken this service with great readiness, and angels have often appeared at the bedside of the sick to tend and watch over them, and amongst others St. Chromace, whom they cured of his gout. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself came to St. Pantaleon to heal his wounds and the frightful burns with which his body was covered at the time of his martyrdom.

Great virtues, then, are necessary, my dear brother, for so important an office, and I tell you, moreover, that you will always remain a very ordinary and inefficient infirmarian if you do not make constant efforts to acquire and practise charity and patience, even in an heroic degree.

In the first place, charity will enable you to exercise constantly all the works of mercy towards the sick, how vast a field then does she not open out before your eyes! As the poor of Jesus Christ, through love of whom they have left father and mother and have given up everything,* these sick patients claim as a right that you should supply them with all the reme-

dies prescribed by the physician (rule 5). But this duty you must do with a thousand acts of kindness, and always with a cheerful countenance; and you must also fulfil in their behalf every regulation of the prefect of health, whom you are to obey as you would the physician, in every respect and in the spirit of charity. This virtue demands peremptorily of you that they be well lodged in the infirmary, and well supplied with all the conveniences possible. At all times and in every place you must secure extreme cleanliness (rule 4), for this contributes much to recovery; and see that each one receives the kind of food suited to his state, at the proper time, and well prepared. Their burning thirst must be assuaged, but with drinks well made and of good quality, and at the stated hour, the same being observed as to their medicines. Bear always in mind, especially when you have many sick to look after, the recommendations in your eighth, ninth, and eleventh rules.

Charity again requires that their bed be carefully made, that it be soft, and that they are well protected against the cold. Secure by your care that neither light nor noise incommode them, nor increase their discomfort and sensitiveness, for these are the ordinary consequence of sickness, one scarcely knows how or why. Spare neither expense, nor time, nor labour to hasten on as much as possible their recovery, forgetting and sacrificing yourself with the love, not of a brother only, but of a mother, that you may ease their pain in imitation of St. Dorothy, who filled this office for many years, or to honour Him who has left us these consoling words—"What you have done to

one of the least of these my servants, you have done it to me." You should then serve the sick with the utmost diligence, love, and tenderness ; as though you were serving Jesus Christ Himself in person. The good brother Simon Buceri passed forty-nine days without going to bed, keeping his watch in his hand, that he might punctually give medicines to a sick Father ; and the writer of his life narrates how our Lord supported him during all that time of almost incredible want of sleep, by the sweetest consolation of heaven, with which He filled his soul during the hour of Mass.

Great charity on the part of other infirmarians has been rewarded by actual miracles. Brother Francis Dias miraculously healed the eye of one Father by sucking out the poisonous matter which had been formed in it ; while another infirmarian, Brother Bartholomew Lorenzo, by merely breathing into the eyes of a Priest in the house, removed at once the terrible torture he was suffering from them.

The last work of corporal mercy which the sick will require of you is to cover their body when they die with the cerecloth, and to take charge of their burial, if no other be appointed for that purpose (rule 15).

But it is above all in the spiritual works of mercy that you can show your charity, for therein is its chief triumph. Each day's fresh experience convinces us that nothing is more common than for a sick man to be led by a perverted instinct to do many things injurious to health, and our good Father knowing this well, has provided us with a corrective to their

danger in that obedience which He requires us to render to the physician and the infirmarian. And by this rule He has given you a certain authority, to which every true son of the Society is bound to bow and submit himself.

May God protect you, my dear brother, from abusing that authority; but it is your duty also to exercise it at the proper time, reminding the sick man of it with all gentleness when he neglects it; and in any particular case, where you may not think it prudent to exercise authority yourself, have recourse to some Father better known to the sick or recovering patient, or else go to his Confessor, or the prefect of health himself, or the Superior, that one of them may warn him and prevail on him to do what is necessary. Let nothing stand in the way of this duty, not even the remembrance, perhaps, that the sick man has great learning and deserves very especial consideration, having this conclusive reason to go by, that not all the learning in the world can make a man a safe judge in his own particular case.

Nor may this consideration deter you from another duty which charity demands of you, charity which when mingled with prudence is the science of the Saints. With zeal, without the shadow of affectation, of flattery, or of a claim to be especially well instructed, you will speak to the sick under your care of holy and spiritual subjects, and to this end you can begin by asking a simple question, as though you wished to be instructed yourself; and who knows but that God, seeing your good desire, may make use of your little knowledge and your rude and uncultured

words, to enlighten and impress the soul of some sick man who may have for many years shone brilliantly in the pulpit or in the professor's chair, and to draw him to be more patient, and to accept it as his purgatory to be on his sick-bed ; or even, if it is to be so, to prepare him for making a holy death ?

It will be well here to remind you of your fifth rule, which directs you to lighten the sufferings of the sick and console them by words happily inspired for that purpose, and by other little recreations approved of by the physician, at least by giving them books likely to interest and amuse them, provided always you have the full consent of the Superior. And since the company and conversation of others best of all distracts the mind from its feelings of suffering, charity herself has dictated your sixth rule, and in her name too, must you faithfully obey it, more especially its second part, begging of God to give you light and grace to carry it out ; particularly should you be infirmarian in a house or college where there are many young members of the Society, for you must not forget that all run many dangers of losing their soul.

There is in this assuredly a great act of charity, but it is equally an act of charity to carry out another recommendation, that you pray to God, pray often for the sick, and beg of Him to bless them, and to bless the remedies also which you apply to them, to bless your watch and your care over them. Offer up such prayer with all your heart, in imitation of St. Cosmas, St. Damian, and St. Pantaleon, who never failed to do this ; offer it up especially on those days which are fullest of work, either in the forenoon or

earlier still, even to the moment in which, being able to do nothing more, and without untying the strings of your apron, you have not a minute of spare time left to take your rest in some corner, and perform a few spiritual duties. Besides this your prayer must not be the prayer of quiet, but of the restless steam, so that if you have to leave God for your sick, which is to leave God for God, you must have no scruples. Still you must not leave God too much, obtaining by your ejaculatory prayers, frequent and full of love, the fruits you would have drawn from a calm and continued meditation. On such days you can well leave it to others to offer up prayer in your stead, and in such circumstances call to mind the saying of Gerson: "Let not the faithful religious distress himself, or lament that too great a stress of exterior work should deprive him of the interior recollection and attention, which he was accustomed to observe when he had more liberty and leisure; and let him not envy the recollection which others enjoy. He must work faithfully, contenting himself with the office which God has committed to him, which is sufficient for him; for after the same manner that he is not thus working exteriorly for himself alone, so those others who can give their time to the exercises of the interior life, do not work interiorly, do not pray, for themselves alone, but for him and for all those of the house who are occupied much with exterior things. When the pressure of work is lightened, at times and at moments when he is more free, he should fly to God and pray to Him, although with many interruptions, and should expose to Him all his

misery, his faults, and his negligences, he should speak to God of his labours and of all that he has to do, offering to Him every compensation in his power, in place of the long hours of meditation and recollection which he would fain enjoy; and with this his mind may remain quite at rest."

The brother infirmarian will pray in an especial manner for those who may speak harshly to him, or may do something to injure him. He will pardon them from his heart, assuring them that he has done so, proving this to them by redoubling his exertions to please and console them. And thus without telling you, I have led you up to the consideration of that second act of the Cross which has been presented to you, and which is at the same time a beautiful pearl in your crown—I mean patience.

What then is required to make a good infirmarian? Let us see whether you will agree with my answer, yet perhaps you will say that you would have given the same answer yourself from the experience you now have of the matter. I believe that to be a good infirmarian you would require to have exactness that would count as one, charity as ten, a thick skin for work that would equal twenty, and patience that would be at a hundred, what do I say, a thousand, aye, a hundred thousand, a million, in fine heroic patience, nothing short of that of the Martyrs.

But is even this all, my dear brother, that you have to present at the tribunal of God, in order to acquit yourself so as to be pronounced a good and holy infirmarian? You have to approve yourself one who has lived contending day and night for a

long term of years amongst persons sensitive in their natural character, and made by sickness troublesome and well-nigh insupportable; you must have shown yourself to be full of gentleness and evenness of temper towards them, neither too cold nor too pressing; and to have never ceased doing for them and for their necessities all in your power. You must never have increased their bad humour nor the complaint which caused it by a single ill-judged word or irritating gesture; or if perhaps you have on this point paid some slight tribute to human weakness, you must have fully, nay, more than fully, repaired it by opposite actions, doing violence to yourself in imitation of the act of St. Catherine of Sienna towards that poor sick woman who had so cruelly mortified her. Have you suffered in patience and charity, according to rule twelve, those feelings of aversion and disgust which many of the services we render to the sick must cost us, as well as all those miseries which flow as a consequence from the diseases themselves, that is to say dislikes, revulsion of feeling and repugnance without end.

With this view, my dear brother, I should tell you that the generosity of your patience must have no limits. In St. Francis Xavier when sucking out and imbibing the corrupt and venomous matter of ulcers; in St. Francis of Assisi, in Francis Dias, lay-brother of the Society, in St. Margaret, Duchess of Lorraine, when assisting the lepers and kissing their hideous wounds, in these behold your models.

I do not mean that you cannot be a good infirmarian without repeating these actions of theirs, but I do say

that if you have not even the desire to aspire and attain to their perfection, you will remain on a lower level than even the just medium ; while you should remember that to you especially may be applied the words of the *Imitation* : “ You will advance in proportion as you know how to do violence to yourself.” You are, through the great goodness of God, called to be a martyr of charity and patience, and you should aspire to so glorious a crown. The holy brother infirmarian of the Order of Citeaux obtained this crown, for having placed himself under the special protection of the first Martyr, St. Stephen, he fulfilled all his duties to the sick with the greatest joy and cheerfulness during thirty years in succession, and at the hour of his death Heaven itself rewarded him by declaring him worthy to be associated with that glorious martyr. Brother Laurence of Ortega also had charge for thirty years of the infirmary, and for five successive years he nursed with extreme devotion and admirable patience a Father who laboured under a most repulsive complaint. This religious appearing to him after death thanked him, embraced him tenderly, and told him that God would greatly reward his patience. To strengthen you still further, let me give you another piece of advice. If at any time you find yourself unable to do more on account of the hard work of your office, and of the many cares it lays upon you, and that you are losing heart because the weakness of human nature absolutely requires rest, recall quickly to mind, that you may gain fresh courage, what you must have read or heard read so often, those many marks of the most tender charity, those

many thoughtful and loving contrivances, and the constant attendance of your father, St. Ignatius, by the bedside of his children and brethren when sick.

An extraordinary care for them descends from him to the Society, and remains with us as a paternal inheritance handed down by our great Architect and founder, who has given a new character and expression to his work, in which one of the chief features is this wonderful tenderness in nursing the sick. Be much then on your guard lest you lose, through your own fault, this glorious mark of descent. I wish to return to this subject afterwards, and, so to speak, strike home and fix firmly this nail in its place. Is there a single person in the Society who has more need than you to ascertain whether God is content with him or not, and to keep his accounts duly balanced with the Divine Majesty. Examine with all simplicity how you stand in respect of patience. See whether you at all resemble the good Brother John, of whom we are told in the Lives of the Fathers, that he attended for twelve years an aged hermit from whom he never received one good word ; till, at last, when this poor man was about to die, he took the hand of the infirmarian, and in the presence of the other Fathers exclaimed : "God keep thee, God keep thee, God keep thee ;" then turning to the Fathers he said, "This brother is not a man ; no, he is an angel from heaven."

Try and be like St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, who begged a certain friend to send him some old woman in needy circumstances that she might take the charge of his house ; but when he found the

person sent to be gentle, humble, and grateful, he begged that another of harsh, unfeeling, and ungrateful character might be sent to take her place.

Now, if at any time you find yourself in charge of a patient of this description, apply to yourself with all humility the answer which the Lives of the Fathers tell us was given to a religious who asked a good old man one day : "which of two monks were the more holy ; one who fasted all the week, and who lived as a solitary in prayer and silence ; or the other, who tended and nursed the sick with very great patience and charity?" When he received for answer, that though the first were to slay himself in the ardour of his penance, he could not even approach to the merit of the second.

OFFICE OF BROTHER PURVEYOR.

He who has this charge in a house has only three short rules to direct his whole conduct, but as these are worth their weight in gold, and as it is of the highest importance that this office be well filled, I shall here give a few short instructions on them. You have only then, my dear brother, to show yourself always very diligent and exact, very faithful and careful in the practice of poverty, giving at the same time edification to all by your modesty.

You must be exact and watchful in informing Father Minister in good time when anything is wanted, or will be soon wanted for the house, if

you have any suspicion that he is not already aware of it. You must be diligent also in buying what is needful, and in giving it out to those who use it; having everything ready so as not to keep them waiting for it, for in this way the community will be well served (rule 1). You must accurately mark down each day the money you have received from Father Procurator, and also what you have paid out (rule 3); not trusting to your memory, on which you cannot always safely depend. Another matter for diligent attention is that you so arrange everything you have to do, as to prevent any of your duties within or without the house from depriving you for a day of a single spiritual exercise, whether meditation or Holy Mass, your beads, your spiritual reading, or the two examens, &c., and let it always be your endeavour to make these exercises with the community, or at least with the other lay-brothers. God will reward greatly this exactness by preserving you from all idle pursuits, and by enabling you to find at once what you are in search of.

You have also to be *faithful* in the use of money, rendering account of everything spent, day by day, and to the last half-penny, like those who have charge of the property of minors. You are called upon to be very especially faithful in leaving yourself like an instrument in the hands of the Superior, or as though you were his very arm, and nothing more. Try to accustom those belonging to the house to receive directions from you through Father Minister, and not to obtain it immediately themselves, for by this means you will avoid at least four great inconveniences. Do

not run about at the command of every one, it is the hardest life in the whole world ; again, do not receive from without messages for those in the house, nor carry messages from within to those outside, except with full knowledge and approval of the Superior ; and this is doubly necessary in the case of all letters and parcels, which you should never undertake to give to persons outside unless you receive them from the Superior himself ; and it is through him that you must deliver to the novices what has been given you for them from friends without. Should any one remark to you that this strictness is very severe and a little overdrawn, forgive him, for he does not know what he is speaking of, and pray to God for him, that such a person may never on any account be appointed Superior in his whole life, for he would have much to suffer.

You must be a true *lover of poverty*, and in case you do not fully understand it, I will explain to you the whole signification of the word. It will direct you (and it is not I who speak here, but our good mother the Society in your second rule), to buy really good articles and at the fairest price possible, even when to secure this you have to go a greater way off. But understand me, to do this is it necessary to go beyond it? Rich persons of the world buy that which is of the very best quality and pay very dear for it, though by going a little further and taking a little more trouble they could have bought at a cheaper rate. This may do very well for rich people, nor indeed if they choose this plan have we any right to blame them ; but by religious this may not be done, and

love of poverty obliges us to travel further in order to obtain what we want. The brother then must fear neither extra trouble nor extra fatigue, to procure what is best suited for us, and at the very best price.

From this it follows that it is in no sense against the spirit of poverty to buy good things, and consequently to treat the servants of God well. On the contrary, cheap buying is often dear buying, and that which is good can never be considered bad even as regards the price. Consult your own experience, make a careful calculation, and you will soon find this to be true; and it is a more important point than at first appears. If you attend to it there will be one less, at all events, who interprets this matter contrary to the spirit of poverty peculiar to the Society.

True poverty does not expect you to buy what is delicate, rich, or exorbitant in price, but no more does it require of you, I should say it absolutely forbids you, to buy things that are of no value and which no one would have, on the pretext, rather ridiculous than sound, that it is a matter only of clothing and nourishing the poor. Avoid then quoting at random, and without comprehending them, the following words of our father, St. Ignatius, who loved poverty, but who took such care of his children. *As to that which regards nourishment, clothing, beds, &c;* and do not, by way of making us *more conformed to this state of poverty*, go and buy for us unwholesome or damaged food, clothing which will not last nor keep us warm, lights that will end in making us soon blind, and in fine a thousand other things which may appear to your eyes good enough for religious, and on which a

high price is not put, for the simple reason that they are valueless. Give up, my brother, as I myself reject poverty like this, which gives rise to a thousand complaints, and prevents all good government on the part of Superiors.

Do everything in your power, while fulfilling your office, to content the Son of the King of Glory, and in proportion as you see the money going and the purse emptying, raise, enlarge your soul, increase your confidence in God whose goodness has covered the little birds with their plumage, and who has promised to give a hundred-fold to those who, through love of Him, have quitted all. May this nevertheless stir up your goodness, and set your ingenuity briskly to work, for God wishes that we should help ourselves, and out of one crown piece produce two; fear not, however, that God can ever be wanting to the necessities of one who has placed his confidence in Him.

These thoughts inspired by faith will also prevent your attaching your heart to the love of money, and your being thus again wanting in real poverty, for there is in truth a danger in that, and it may easily take hold of you when you are in the daily use of this vile metal. Money, as it has been said, soils two things—the hand, and the soul of him who loves the touch of it.

I will not say more to you about poverty, because I suppose you to be a man incapable, through your religious profession, of appropriating to yourself the value of a pin's head, or of receiving the smallest little present from whomsoever it may be, unless intended for the community; nor yet of even presum-

ing leave of Superiors in a matter affecting poverty, nor again of displeasing God and charging your conscience with sin, in order to satisfy even the caprices of the giddiest of your brothers. I will only call to your mind the words of Hugh of St. Victor, in his book on the *Solitude of the soul*, when addressing those religious who held the same office that you do: "Let each one of you fear to fall into the snare which the devil casts about you by means of the money in your hands; and well remember that there was a Judas amongst the twelve Apostles! This unhappy man, led on by his miserable passion, sold for so unworthy a price Him who was the price of the world, and for a little money delivered up to his enemies Him who deserved to be loved and esteemed more than all the gold and silver, and all the precious stones that exist."

With respect to *modesty* I have a good deal to say to you, because in truth almost daily when passing through the streets you appear before men as a kind of test and sample of the house, and as one pronounces on the quality of cloth from the pattern produced, so you too should remember that it is the honour or the dishonour of the community which is seen in your person to pass through the town and in the public places. Mark how the fourth of your rules speaks of the edification which you should give, and bids you do all in your power to promote that, within the limits of wise discretion. Let us now come to the practice.

Immediately on leaving the house turn your thoughts to the guardian angel who accompanies

you, recommend yourself to him wherever you go, and beg him to watch over your senses. On starting let your eyes be cast down, and keep them modestly lowered without the slightest affectation in your manner. With eyes downcast, with your beads in your hand, and your heart fixed on heaven, you will do what Brother John Baptist Casella bade his companion do, when he had to leave the house and pass through the streets. If you take up any other habit, your imagination will soon begin to bubble up like a kettle on the fire, and will cause you much suffering while you thus pass along the streets, entering freely into shops and houses, and in the midst of all this coming and going, talking ceaselessly to all sorts of persons.

Ah, why are you not content to speak but little, and only what it is necessary to say, and always with edification, as a good religious should do. Leave this perpetual chatting to mountebanks and artful gipsies, who in selling would make a cat pass for a hare. Do your best not to be taken in by them, but speak little, for there is no question here of useful conversation. Do not waste your time, attend to your business and nothing more. Superiors have given you permission to go out only for that, and not with a view to make of you a sort of hook or noose to catch hold of and bring back into the house the gossip about all that is happening in the neighbourhood. Never would they consent that you should, on the plea of being tired, make a display of yourself in the back part of a shop, and there, with all the freedom of an old customer, continue joking with the owner or the shop-

people, listening to the recital of their troubles, giving them advice, speaking to them about the Fathers in the house, going over with them all sorts of stories of past times, or of the news of the day ; suffering yourself to be thus drawn out for the amusement of these good people, to the sacrifice of prudence, charity, and obedience, and all this to an extent far more serious in its consequences than you have any idea of.

I trust that God will never allow this to happen to you, and remember I do not speak here of things that might happen to the possible inhabitants of the stars, but of what might easily happen to you here below.

Be a miser as to one thing alone, namely time ; and conduct yourself in such manner and with so great modesty, that when you enter heaven you may find, to your great surprise and joy, that by your fidelity to these rules you have made conquest of a soul. So was it with St. Odo, Abbot of Cluny, the very sight of whom on one occasion caused the conversion of a great sinner. The same is told of your protector, Blessed Alphonsus, and this word of St. John Chrysostom will be always true—"Example teaches better than words."

OFFICE OF BROTHER DISPENSER.

It is the duty of the brother dispenser to give out what the buyer has brought to the house for the community. Four points will be sufficient to enable him to fill his office well, with both temporal and spiritual profit, and with fidelity to the practice of his rules.

The first of these is vigilance, for what purpose will it have served for the brother buyer to have brought in his provisions as he ought, if the other does not take care to keep them and prevent their being spoilt? (rule 4).

If a servant steals anything in the house of his master, his sin is greater or less in proportion to the value of what he has taken; and yet you, my brother, think you do not sin if through your fault and culpable want of vigilance and attention you suffer the things committed to your care to become spoilt or wasted. The saints would not waste even the crumbs of bread which lay on the table after their meals, so great love had they for poverty and care for the temporal good of the house; and the third of your rules lays this duty on you.

What would be your astonishment were you to see with what rigour and with what penances the least negligence on this point is punished in the rules dictated by our Lord to St. Pachomius.

Do not however imagine that I wish to see you going about in rags and misery, nor that your vigilance should degenerate into avarice. Try to find the true middle point: on the one hand, do not give out more than the Superior would willingly permit, for to do this would be to act as though these things belonged to you, and you might fall into sin to a serious extent; on the other hand, carry out that which is ordered with so much interior peace and simplicity, that not only will you not be put out nor wound charity, when any one of the house, or one placed under you, fails in his duty or commits a mistake, but you will never be seen to take in bad part any apparent extravagance allowed in any office, even when it may appear to you uncalled for, as for example that too much is given to the infirmarian for the sick or convalescent. So far from this, dispense readily and with pleasure any extra things to the infirmarian, and if it be impossible to give him all the sweet things which he may desire, give him at least, in order to make up, gentle and pleasant words. Read over and meditate what the first rule says about the infirm.

What would I not give to fill you with the spirit of the famous dispenser of Granada, Brother Francis Naranjo? This great servant of God was, for a number of years, head dispenser, and was so fortunate as to be able to leave that office without a single person having on any occasion complained of him, or been able to say that he had seen him even once look vexed or angry, or render a service to another unwillingly. And yet we are assured in his life that

he was a man of quick temper, and that he was very far from being naturally as gentle as a lamb. Brother Thomas Giovanni was dispenser for forty successive years, and never allowed others to perceive that he was fatigued. He was at all times ready to answer every one, with a smile on his lips, and he had the happiness, on account of this sweetness of manner, never to be called by his own name, but to be always called: The good brother.

If you are charitable, every one will be pleased with you, and will love you, because you will be ready to help all equally, as your first rule recommends you. And you will never be drawn by any private affection to give the best of a thing to one in particular, and to another that which is not so good; a little only to this one, and a good deal to that other. If you make any distinction, it should be in favour of the sick. You must be always very exact in the distribution of alms, following carefully on this point the orders or desires of the Superior; and you must fulfil this duty with a sincere love both for the poor, and for the good of the community through the interest that you take in it, fully persuaded that almsgiving will draw down the blessings of heaven upon the house; and avarice, on the contrary, its curse. One day the servant of St. Paulinus refused to obey him, and, despite his positive orders, would not give to a poor man the last loaf of bread that remained, in punishment for which fault a terrible storm sank some boats that were laden with abundant provisions intended for the house.

Another virtue, very necessary if you would do

everything well in your office, is diligence in giving out and distributing in good time whatever is wanted for the other offices in the community. Observe how great a gainer you will be by the practice of this virtue. You will avoid all those murmurs and complaints which are a perfect torment. Everything will be done in good order and according to rule, every one will have what he stands in need of, and at the time when he wants it; and were anything by chance deficient, then you cannot reasonably be blamed. You will also have plenty of time and leisure, and you will enjoy more liberty for occupying yourself at least some hours in any suitable work.

Be careful to appoint at what fixed hours all should come to ask from you what they require, and do not keep any one waiting, even for a minute. Hold each one much in esteem, as though he was your Superior, as the rule expects of you. Have always a humble opinion of yourself, and I promise you that you will serve all as your brothers with promptness, with punctuality, and with joy, that is to say with a diligence perfect at all points.

I would also remind you, and I beg of you not to lose sight of it, that negligence in these matters comes generally from a certain pride and haughtiness of disposition, inspiring a secret and subtle desire to hold in your power and subject to your orders the other offices of the house, as well as those who have charge of them. Nay, though few would believe it, this may sometimes spring from a spiteful desire to be revenged for some little pain caused you. But may heaven preserve you from so great a misery. And should you

have perceived the slightest indication of this feeling in your heart, heal at once this wound by the remedy of humility, and make for some time your particular examen on so important a subject.

If you become truly diligent and exact, you will avoid having to give the key of your store-room to any person either in the house or out of it. The Superior and you yourself alone ought to have a key, otherwise there is constant danger of all the articles under your care being disarranged. The single case of exception will be, when, either by necessity or obedience, you are called away at one and the same time to two different duties. In which case you must make a representation to the Superior, and he will provide.

Bear in mind that the annals of religious orders are full of sad examples and often Divine judgments brought down on themselves by negligent and inattentive brothers who, through their own fault, expose to the danger of being wasted and spoilt what has been brought in for the community and to feed the poor of Jesus Christ. St. Basil, and other Saints besides, look upon this culpable negligence in a religious house as a real act of sacrilege. In the fourth of your rules mention is made of the last virtue especially belonging to the office of dispenser, cleanliness; and it occurs also in the seventh rule, with reference to the cellar. These two rules are of the very highest importance, for you must be well aware, my brother, and you should feel the truth of it, that there are certain things to which the servants of God, whom you are called to serve in this office,

cannot accustom themselves. They are persons well brought up, and did that which they eat or drink pass only through their own hands, everything would be marked by a cleanliness very much greater, and would be kept by them in far better order, than is sometimes the case in our houses.

Do not say that we are poor men, and that for a poor man anything is good enough ; no, and good sense should always except from this general maxim that slovenliness which is good only for the besotted.

Yes, it is true we are poor men, so poor in fact that we cannot afford that anything in the house should be wasted, anything taken from us. Why then these stains of oil on all sides, these pools of wine in the cellar, this dirt adhering to the pots, or lying about on the floor, or staining the walls, which it grieves one to the very heart to see? All those things of which we have no need, with others besides, why do they remain sometimes whole weeks with you, it is because you have forgotten the directions of the fifth and seventh of your rules.

My last counsel I shall give you in the form of a story, the point of which is to teach you the necessity of being well mortified. To other resolutions taken during his youth by Brother Naranjo in the spirit of mortification, he added one that he would never during his life touch either grape or melon, though he was extremely fond of both. And he showed himself so faithful, so generous, in carrying it out, that he took not even one seed of the grape, nor the smallest piece of melon, even when, being forced to leave Spain, he landed with his brothers in Corsica,

where they had no means of living, and where it might be said there was nothing to eat except fruit. Do not imagine that such a mortification was a small matter, for though as an act of penance it may appear light, yet when you reflect that this penance lasted for a great many years, you will understand what sacrifices it must have caused. He himself often stated that he could not take his eyes off the grapes and melons which he saw around him in great abundance, and of which, as dispenser, he had the care, year after year, to give them out when wanted for the community. Now, I hope that you have understood my meaning, and will apply the spirit of this resolution to yourself.

OFFICE OF BROTHER COOK.

All that I have already written for the dispenser as regards cleanliness, you, my dear brother, must look upon as addressed to yourself; and for this especial reason, that cleanliness ought to be the distinguishing mark of your office. I grant, at once, it is in a manner impossible that you can be as particular with respect to your personal appearance as a brother sacristan or porter, because you have to do with grease all the day, and so cannot avoid some stains on either hands or clothes; to expect it were to ask an impossibility. But at the same time I am quite certain that not one person in a hundred can fail to draw this distinction

between one cook and another, even after seeing them a few times only, that one is clean and careful, while the other is dirty and slovenly in his habits. The worst point, however, is that if there be no principle of cleanliness within, that is to say, if it be not a virtue proceeding from a natural quality of character, there is small hope of correction ; a great mistake has been made in appointing such a man at all to this office, for he will profit little from all the advice and all the words that can be bestowed on him.

For my part, I consider that the first point to ascertain in the appointment of a cook ought to be, whether he has a drawing to, whether he has a marked taste for cleanliness, because in all sincerity I believe that the servants of God would far rather eat every day a vegetable soup of the simplest kind, prepared by a good and careful cook who was strictly clean in every respect, than viands of a more delicate quality dressed by certain persons, whom you perhaps could describe quite as well as myself, my good brother.

Be well assured that we expect a little cleanliness from you, and that God Himself asks for and requires the same. See how the Society our mother places this virtue in the first rank, she speaks of it in your first two rules, bidding you observe it well and see that it is observed by those who help and take example from you, by those in fine who do any work in the kitchen, for it is in this sense that you must interpret what I look upon as the motto of the rule : *and the others.*

Be not satisfied then simply to observe this point

most exactly yourself, and to keep yourself free from all marks of dirt as much as possible; but watch over the cleanliness of the kitchen itself, and the tidy arrangement of all that is in it, as well as the brightness of the pots and pans that you have been using. And if at certain hours, when in actual use, things are left lying about for a time, yet there should be fixed days and hours for a general cleaning and arranging, after which a holy vanity may be allowed in making a grand display of your array of kitchen utensils in great order and in great brilliance. And what edification would not this give to persons from without should any one happen to pass by the kitchen, or near the scullery, which is also under your charge. Some trouble doubtless is necessary to do all this thoroughly, but if there be goodwill the thing can undoubtedly be done.

Would you have me tell you a sure way of success? Do not spare labour, be ever ready to use your arms well; give a good example in your own person, and lead the way in love of work. Remain stanch and firm in your own kitchen like a strong staff, and nothing that you can do with your own hands should you suffer to be done by another, for no orders are so well executed as those which you give to yourself. Be resolved to gain the reputation of being a man especially strict, so that all in the house will feel sure that none would dare in your presence, any more than you yourself would, to touch any article with that fork of five prongs, the hand (rule 2). Do not spare yourself trouble when engaged in washing and re-washing each thing

that is to be put into the pot. I beg you, in God's name, be inexorable on this point, and if your charitable advice is not enough, acquaint the Superior with the fact, and he will place such or such a person in some other occupation less unsuited to his character of laziness and thoughtlessness, to call it by no worse name.

Love of work will preserve in your mind a certain spirit of humility, which you should show in your words and actions. You are aware that when reference is made to the humility of an office, that of the cook often gets the preference. We admire the humility of several illustrious princes and princesses who have gladly filled the office, we praise a St. Ignatius and St. Francis Borgia, and other well known servants of God, because they humbly obeyed the brother cook ; and such humility is admirable, but for what exact reason? The reason appears to me to be because nothing humbles a man so much as the necessity under which he lies of eating, and thus nourishing his vile body, and hence it is natural that the office, engaged in supplying this nourishment of the body, begets in our minds the same thoughts and feelings of humility.

There is much to say against this opinion, but none the less on that account should you cherish this thought in your heart, and apply it to yourself in your position ; profit by it to practise a virtue which elevates us and makes the very angels envy us. The constant intercourse which in the kitchen you have with those in the house, and with other persons of all kinds, will afford a thousand opportunities

of putting this virtue of humility into practice, both interiorly and exteriorly, by speaking to all when it is necessary, but with much pleasantness, giving them what they ask for, and serving them in everything that is possible ; avoiding, even with inferiors, both inside and outside of the house, the mere shadow of unpoliteness or coarseness of manner, being on your guard never to command with pride, and allowing not even a gesture that might have the appearance of it ; also as to Superiors, depending in every respect on their will, as to each thing connected with the table, the quantity and quality of what is served up, the very manner of dressing the dishes, content only to lay before them with modesty what you think ought to be mentioned, though it may not be according to their views.

Having now explained, with regard to nourishment, the question of what, in what way, and how much, I will tell you, brother, for your instruction that in five of your rules, the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth, mention is made of poverty ; and if it is necessary to warn you that your duties expose you to many faults against this virtue, it is also certain that in observing your rules well, you need have nothing to fear.

They require you in one place to be in perfect dependence upon your Superior, and he who obeys cannot deceive himself ; in another part they bid you observe particular vigilance and a wise economy in the use both of coal and wood, and in a word as to everything, being careful that you waste nothing, but collect together all that remains, and make use

of it conscientiously. This is enough to say of your duty to God and to holy poverty, I will only add that the greatest possible goodwill and very great prudence are expected of you. Never can the virtues be at war amongst themselves, your poverty then should be allied to charity. The religious state, the common life, already contains sufficient trials, penances, austerities, enough of crosses and privations of every kind, without adding a holy brother cook who imagines himself obliged to add another to these crosses every twenty-four, indeed, every twelve hours. Love poverty as much as you desire, I fully commend you, but then begin by applying to yourself its effects, bear towards your brothers the tender sentiments of charity, treat them well, act not niggardly towards them, keep back from them nothing which the Superior permits you to give them, either as to the quality, the quantity, or the seasoning of their food; for, after all, since it is God who gives these to us, and gives them for a certain good, I do not see what right a cook has to wish to deprive us of them, or change the gifts of God into so much suffering, or poison.

If, for example, you are one of those untrained cooks, such as we find sometimes in our houses, if you have been sent into the kitchen because somebody was wanted to pour water into the pots, and if it is absolutely necessary that you should be cook, I beg of you, for the love of God, do everything you can to learn, not by acquiring experience at the cost of the stomachs of the religious, but by asking for information, and then begging to have some book

to direct you, in fine by using your very best industry, as though it were a question of saving and prolonging by your care the life of your father or your mother, neither more nor less than this. Leave it for each one to practise the penance he selects, but do not charge yourself with the duty of imposing one on any, I care not whom. There would be no merit in that to any one, neither to you nor to others, but in truth this were to place yourself higher than a Provincial, who dare not impose a similar penance upon a whole community. Should the day come on which any one leaves the refectory without having partaken of any particular dish, through your fault in dressing it, know you whom that would profit? It would simply profit the devil himself, and him alone, who would dance with joy because he had inflicted a miserable quarter of an hour on the friends of God; and you vainly imagine perhaps that you have made them perform an act of virtue!

What I have said makes you nevertheless bound to give attention to economy, remembering that you have to render an account to God of what is wasted in the kitchen; observe the significance of the word, *wasted*, that which comes to loss through your fault, either in your want of attention, or in your voluntary ignorance; a waste which may have cost often a good deal of money, as much even as would feed several more in the community.

Before I finish, I venture to recommend to you sobriety as a virtue against which you will have many temptations. We observe that few cooks are great eaters. It seems as though to be constantly employed

amongst dishes and watching roasts is sufficient to satiate them without eating ; but there are some dainty persons who like well enough choice bits, the cream and flower of their cooking, they have a taste for delicate sweetmeats ! Yes, there are a few such, confess now, my good brother, there are just one or two ! Now this looks very bad in a religious, for a Jesuit terribly bad, on account of so many strict rules which forbid it. But it would be far worse still in a cook that he should strive to cool the heat that burns him, and enters in through all the pores of his body, by drinking some good glasses of pure wine. No, my brother, put in a little water, if the dispenser has not done that already according to the wise and wholesome rule, for then it will be of much greater service in appeasing your thirst, and will prevent any harm to your soul.

This advice, however, will be quite needless if you are truly pious and religiously inclined, as indeed many are who have been charged with the same office as yourself, for, in truth, it deserves to be called the employment of saints. But this can be easily understood, they have the sight of fire always before their eyes, it is for them an object of continual contemplation, and a constitution of place for meditating on the fire of the bottomless pit, of which the fire which they see before them is a sort of picture. In plucking and preparing any animal food, in placing it on the fire, in handling the pincers, knife, or other instruments used, who could fail to think of the tortures of the martyrs, and to pray for their faith, or stir oneself up to the desire of imitating

them? It is by these means that the good and saintly Brother Peter of Falcimes made such rapid progress in piety, during the twenty-four years which he spent in the office of cook in his convent, and that he obtained the grace of dying suddenly in the middle of fervent prayer as in ecstasy, at the feet of a statue of his mother, the Blessed Virgin, to whom he had a most tender devotion. Excite yourself to imitate him, and it will not take long to sanctify yourself in this employment, which requires much patience, it is true, but which assures you of a very high glory hereafter.

There are in heaven many saints who await you, saints who have held the same office, saints your brothers; they were wholly devoted to God by the habit of prayer and of the most sublime contemplation, they were often caught up into an ecstasy of love. Such were, amongst others, Brothers Simon Bucceri, Rodriguez Flores, James Yebenez, John Baptist Oran, John Briones, Albert Hebdovio, Henry Von Blusen.

OFFICE OF BROTHER REFECTORIAN.

This office, in religious houses, is by no means one of small importance, it gives opportunities of great influence for good ; if a brother fills it as God would have him and as his rules direct, not only will he procure order and good harmony in a community, at the most difficult hour of the whole day, but he will besides avoid a number of imperfections, and even of graver faults.

My dear brother, your very first rule recommends to you cleanliness as one of the highest virtues of this office, and you are told to take care that the refectory, and all things belonging to it, are very clean. You cannot be ignorant that the refectory is a place of relaxation and refreshment for the religious, who have passed all the morning, or all the afternoon, in great labours of either mind or body, and who come there to regain their strength and recover from their fatigues, in a way fully allowed and holy. But who does not see that this place could never help to such an end, and that 'on the contrary, it would give rise only to disgust and aversion, or annoyance and discontent, if on entering they found it dirty, untidy, and in disorder ; the floor covered with crumbs of bread, with small bones, and other things that have fallen from the plates ; the walls coated with dust, the windows full of cobwebs ; the

tablecloths dirty, the plates unwiped, the tumblers, knives, and dish-covers half-washed; all in fine so badly prepared, so disgusting, that we would naturally imagine ourselves rather in a low tavern, or an ill-appointed inn. You ought then, my dear brother, you and the brother cook together, to be as Martha, so active, so zealous; you ought to spare no labour in preparing for the friends and companions of Jesus the food necessary for them, and with that amount of carefulness which will really profit and do them good. You should draw down praise upon yourself, and make them confess that you have everything as bright as a button, that not even the house of a prince could boast of a grander or better laid-out dining-room. In fine, that you are as careful as Martha.

Along with cleanliness, neatness, and complete order, the refectorian must show a fidelity that can stand any trial; for, as it is true that everything left on the table should be removed to its proper place (rule 10), to either the kitchen or the pantry, there is certainly in the fulfilment of this duty more than one occasion of proving yourself very faithful, either in refusing to those of the house that which they should not take, or in being especially careful not to suffer many things to be lost, which are generally very little attended to. God alone can tell how many faults you and others may fall into on this point, if you give not the very greatest attention to it. This fidelity is inseparable from the love of silence and recollection which the rule obliges you to observe yourself, and to make others observe

in the place in which your office is fulfilled, for it is one of those requiring most respect in the whole house; it is inseparable also from the love of poverty, in not disposing according to your own pleasure of what remains from the table which does not belong to you, under the pretext that youth which works hard should eat much and especially drink much. It is necessary to avoid either keeping up or introducing certain abuses in giving to all who ask for something, perhaps in even forcing them to take it, with great injury both to the Order and to the interests of the religious house placed under your care.

There are communities of six or eight religious, in which, to speak without any exaggeration, food, wine, and other provisions are wasted that would be amply sufficient to feed double that number; and all this owing to the carelessness of a refectorian, who pays attention to nothing, and who does the work every day of both dispenser and server all at the same time. Ah! poor brother, what regrets are in store for you, when perhaps very soon you will hear these words: "Render Me account of all that has passed through your hands." Keep your eye, then, ever on the watch, brother; pay every attention, remembering what we are told in the life of St. Odo, abbot, how there was at that time a brother refectorian, to whom, at the moment of his death, God Himself uttered the bitterest reproaches for having suffered the pieces of bread that remained on the tables to go to waste. Attend to this above all, that you be prudent, nor let even your fidelity to rules

degenerate into a fault, by embarrassing yourself with scruples, or by having a note-book continually in your hand for entering every little thing you have to give.

After carrying out all these directions do not imagine that you are now perfect, seeing that you are still in need of much patience and self-control. You will on many occasions require a great amount of patience, for you have to deal not only with dishes and bottles, but with a number of persons who, through the requirements of their office, must have recourse to you. But grace has been given to you for this, my brother, and you must look well to it that no one receives cause for complaint in your treatment of them, that you allow nothing to ruffle your temper, that you give no signs of impatience, nor raise your voice so as to be heard a good way off when you are asked for that which you cannot give, or when anything is said that you would rather not have heard. Believe me, a plaster saint in the refectory will never have many clients ; he is like one of those figures that fill a niche in some corner, which remains so long unbroken and undisturbed simply because no one touches it.

Do everything calmly, let there be no over-haste, prepare therefore each thing in time ; too much bustle does no good, it only fatigues the mind, and in your office leads to breaking the plates and glasses which you have so often to handle.

Another point helping much to the careful exercise of moderation and temperance, is that you examine yourself as to the practice of those things which you

may look upon as necessary, and which yet are not so, such as eating and drinking out of meal hours. Ask yourself whether you felt this necessity when you were in another office, and had not all these things so constantly before your eyes and in your hands.

I am sure that you do not absolutely appropriate anything to yourself, and that you do nothing without permission, but examine yourself carefully before asking this leave, and do not too readily believe that all the permissions you may obtain will serve before the tribunal of God as an excuse for you; they may perhaps only prove this one point, that you do not know how to mortify yourself.

Be especially careful how you act with regard to wine. Many pagan nations, like the Scythians, Lacedæmonians, and Romans, forbade its use, for which they must have had a good reason. In religion it will be still less difficult to find many good reasons to give to those who, on the pretext of restoring or keeping up their strength for fresh heavy work, raise the little finger, as they say, somewhat too often, while another reason is that it gives a very bad example, and might have fatal consequences. As to the consequences, indeed, God alone knows them, or who will be their victims; as to the bad example, it is evident of itself and plain enough to the very eye.

May heaven protect you, my brother, from this abuse and from all harm! If you follow Blessed Henry Suso, of the Order of Preachers, always faithful to the point of never eating or drinking anything except at meal hours, not even towards night

and when he was dying of thirst, you may hope to obtain the same grace that he did, when after long suffering the holy Virgin gave him heavenly water to drink, which for ever after quenched his burning thirst. I wish this, indeed, for you with all my heart, and only hope I have not taken you too much by surprise in speaking to you with so much openness and freedom. Is it not for this very purpose that I have written this book, to prevent abuses where, by the grace of God, they do not yet exist; and where, unhappily, they perhaps do exist, to stifle them in the bud as soon as they appear.

OFFICE OF THE BROTHER LINEN-KEEPER.

That holy and excellent virtue which induces a man of Christian spirit to help another in his work and to take his place for him, a virtue which is no other than true religious discretion or prudence, when combined with charity and uprightness in everything, behold the qualities required in him who is placed in the linen-room. This office is one of first importance in every house, but more particularly so in a large religious community. It is necessary you should have these qualities, and, besides these, a great love of order and neatness; a great esteem for holy poverty, and that foresight which enables you to have an eye to, and prepare things in good time. Having these qualifications, we have one perfectly

fitted for the care of the linen, such as we imagine before us when we have read the twelve rules which the Society, our good mother, has set apart for this office.

You will tell me that these are many virtues to require, but the reason is that he who has received this charge should be as a visible Providence and resource for everything, a natural and necessary guardian of those who, for the love of God, have left father and mother, and he ought to stand in their place to provide for one of the greatest necessities of life.

Have you found in your heart, my brother, a full answer to the appeal for all these virtues? If, unfortunately it is not so, yet have courage and confidence, set out on the road to it, and you will arrive at that point in time. Commence by close observance of the second of your rules, for, in a word, you are a kind of administrator and depositary of a number of things, and you should never go to rest without feeling sure, that were the Superior to require account of you as to how you had fulfilled your duties, you could render it at once, and so clearly, that he could with the greatest accuracy see and judge of all the details, just as we sometimes can discern the smallest pebbles that lie at the bottom of a limpid stream.

In the next place, keep an exact inventory, let each thing be in its own place, what is new separated from what is old and worn out, and see that this division contains no article of wear that is not well mended (rule 3). Let there be no little corner or concealed press where old clothes and rags are thrown together

in a disordered heap ; because all that is no longer of any service ought to be given away as the Superior shall have directed (rule 3). You have here in a few words that which makes the merit and glory of a well kept linen-room, and gives certain proof that the brother in charge has good disposition, the knowledge of his work, and a great love of order.

But when and how will you give us the proof that you possess all these virtues, and that you are striving with all your heart to be charitable, faithful, exact, fond of poverty, and also provident ? This will show itself chiefly in the careful practice of the fifth, sixth, and seventh of your rules. In truth, the rule leaves it to your prudence to acquaint the Superior when a religious should have a new habit, or new linen, according to his need, and at the same time it forbids you to give anything of any kind without permission. Besides this, she depends on your intelligence and charity that you will not commit the absurdity of giving to a father, not five feet in height, a shirt long enough to serve for an alb to another very much taller, or of reversing the order ; each article of linen, therefore, ought to have a particular mark on it. She equally confides in you, without putting it into so many words, to have all the body linen properly marked, paying particular attention in this point to the convenience, health, and a certain propriety of feeling, more than even to poverty itself. In fine, the rule commits to your fidelity alone the duty of not permitting, either through laziness, negligence, or any other insufficient reason, a member of the community to keep in his room more linen than he

has need of; wherefore you should once a month look over what they have, gather the superfluous supply together and keep it in the linen-room, as also you should watch that the habits and cloaks of our brothers be shorter than those of the fathers, according to the custom of the Society.

You see already that many things, and things requiring great care, are placed in your hands; you see also how much good sense, experience, and yet religious simplicity you need, before you can make it evident to all who are in the house that you have but one only desire, that of being equally attentive to all, of serving all, in a word, of doing faithfully your duty, without human respect and without consideration of persons.

But it is by no means easy to attain to this, for we are but men; and not only is it not easy, but it is not even possible to please all the world. And this is doubly true in the case of the linen-room and of him who keeps it, because there are so many and such different occasions for coming into contact with one another; unfailing success would be a perfect miracle. It is not one, nor two, nor yet only a dozen, but every one in the house who has need of you, since each one is either cold or warm, and must have clothes. And amongst them there are sure to be some particularly delicate whom the seams and mending hurt, others who are terribly afraid of cold, and who do not wish to have either damp shirts or damp sheets, and they are right. Some will ask you for more pocket-handkerchiefs a week, and some who suffer much from perspiration during the summer will wish to have

more than one shirt and several flannel-waistcoats. In short, each one may very likely have some particular thing to ask for ; those, above all, who have a strange facility in dirtying and wearing out quickly everything given them, and have no time to keep all these blemishes out of sight. You know well that you must have experience of these various troubles, and go into all these details ; but yet you must not forget that it is your duty to preserve your calmness and presence of mind, nor suffer the many wants of the one or the too great delicateness of the other, to rob you of the treasure of patience and charity ; or yet drive you into vexation and despair, should the orders of your Superior oblige you to do what you have already refused to do, remembering that such a feeling, so far from being necessary, would, on the contrary, be very ridiculous.

Nothing could excuse you before the eyes of God for being wanting in any one of these duties of your charge, nor for falling into the thousand little faults to which those of our brothers are exposed who hold offices that bring them into constant contact with the members of the community : such as making themselves very important, giving themselves ridiculous airs, being affected or over-nice, having to be looked for very often and always in vain, or making a number of remarks upon any request of a father or brother, to see if it contains all the conditions which the catechism requires for an oath : truth, justice, necessity. Then some will raise a hundred objections and difficulties in the question of giving anything, as though it cost them money ; they will ask him who comes to get

some article whether he has real need of it, especially if he be a Priest, or whether he has got permission to ask for it ; and, mark this, if one only of these foolish little observations is scarcely bearable, it would be far worse to fall at once into all of them. If when saying or doing any of these things you know quite well what you are doing, you must be of a very rash and proud disposition ; if you do not know the nature of your conduct, you are in that case only a poor man of good intention, who requires to receive a rather sharp answer. Were it to happen that you had a *well-grounded suspicion* that a certain one had come without permission, you can have recourse to the Superior himself, always after having done that which was asked of you ; but pay attention to the emphasis I have laid on the two words, *well-grounded suspicion*. And after you have done all that has been recommended to you, do not imagine that you are yet a perfect linen-room man, because, I assure you, still more is needed for that.

No one can know better than yourself what labour there is in managing and in providing beforehand for a large community. The brothers in charge of the linen-room and of the kitchen are like two greedy leeches, for, in truth, short of a miracle, we cannot live without both being fed and being clothed. Upon you, then, lies the obligation of being on the watch that the expenses are not too great. How are you to do this ? I answer, by acquiring the necessary information ; as, for instance, the price of linen, cotton, cloth, thread, and needles, or the wage for a day's work ; and by desiring to learn as much about the

qualities of different stuffs as will prevent others from having the opportunity of cheating a poor religious, of selling him a cat for a hare, and of fleecing and making mincemeat of him at their pleasure, pretending all the while that they deserve great thanks for the service they have been rendering.

Yes, we should be simple as the dove, but with a little of the cunning of the serpent, according to the warning which the Uncreated Holiness and Wisdom Himself has given us, and then we shall lose nothing. There is no need, therefore, to take the desponding side, and make up your mind to pay all that is asked, but you must try to maintain the rights of holy poverty.

This advice will be so much the more necessary for you, should the procurator, for his part, pay less attention to that point. If you have under your orders tailors working by the day, look well after what they are doing and how much pay they can make, seeking really to do them as much good as you can ; and if you yourself can ply the needle, you can do better still by setting them the good example of never raising your head, and never leaving your place unless compelled, of keeping silence, and of avoiding all jokes and familiarities, for which you would be sorry the next day. Be mindful in your office of the proverb : The lamb that bleats loses a mouthful. And so the less you make of these points the less will your good angel have to note in your favour in his book. It is so easy for you to think of him in this office, where you may always be in silence, where everything helps to recollection, and to the pious

remembrance how the holy Virgin Mary must have attended thus to the clothing of the Divine Infant Jesus, and how St. Joseph, his reputed father, probably assisted her in this pious care. Picture to yourself with what devotion, with what purity of intention both our Lady and St. Joseph worked at Nazareth, and then try to imitate them ; you will not be the first for whom our Lord, to reward such fidelity, has prepared a beautiful throne in heaven amongst the most sublime seraphim, as He one day revealed expressly He had done for a brother of the Order of St. Francis of Paul, named Denant.

OFFICE OF BROTHER SUBMINISTER.

This office may be filled either by a lay-brother or by a father, according to the circumstances of the house or college. It will not therefore be inexpedient for us to make some observations at the end of the rules which we have quoted from the Institute, taking all the different offices in succession, with the exception of Visitor at Night ; with regard to which the only remark necessary is that he should be exact in the duty he has to perform, and therefore be wakeful and vigilant. The brother who accompanies fathers in their visits must bear in mind the terms of the fifth general rule of the lay-brothers, which enjoins prudence and fidelity as applied to his particular office. For the subminister longer directions are requisite,

that he may fully understand his rules, and know how to carry them out.

The first point, then, that he should clearly understand is that if a lay-brother is appointed to the office of subminister, the seventh and last of his rules ceases to apply, since there remains not even the shadow of superiority, the most that one can say is that you have been charged to deliver out work to the brothers, as if you had been their *bidel*; hence, there can be question only of the points that are contained in the fourth rule. In a word, understand that you have no leave to do anything beyond what is given you by the Rector or Minister, whose arm or instrument you are (rule 1). It is absolutely requisite, then, that the extent to which your powers reach should be fully explained to you, as also what you should do with regard to certain points, as, for example, the fifth rule, concerning visits to the rooms. Without these precautions you will expose yourself to the danger of many foolish mistakes, as well as acts of still greater imprudence, instead of being a perfect model of experience and good sense.

Be advised then by me and imply no reproach to any one, make no boast of being a zealous and severe guardian of discipline. Cast no angry looks on any poor brothers who have committed some fault against the rule, or who may have been a little heedless of those of their own office. Do not talk in a loud tone, nor speak roughly to your brothers in Jesus Christ. They have, like you, entered religion in order to place themselves under the yoke of God, and the chains by which they are bound are those of the most sweet and

tender charity. More flies are caught with one drop of honey than by a whole ton of vinegar ; through hardness of treatment souls are only alienated, instead of being either gained to God or made to love the rule. You will soon irritate them against yourself, while indeed you are present and from the moment that you appear they will preserve silence and external recollection, but scarcely will you have turned your back when they will scorn you, because they see you have taken up a very disastrous and absurd line of conduct.

Think on the reason for which you have been appointed subminister, and there will be no fear of your allowing yourself to be dazzled by this dignity, or of imagining that you are superior to your brothers. You have been appointed simply that you might be an example to the rest by your modesty, silence, obedience, and charity, by prudence and other virtues ; and exactly because you have been hitherto the most dissipated and the most imprudent, the least careful and the least mortified of all in the house.

By the help of this antidote against self-deception, and with this motive for holy humility, you may proceed on your road without fear of doing yourself or others much harm ; on the contrary, you may gain many advantages, for it will always be to you as a goad, urging you on to observe the rules and to practise all the virtues of the religious life much more perfectly. For the rest also it will be a true gain, as you will thus find your place like some very small wheel within the beautiful machinery which

the Spirit of God makes to act in all its parts for His greater glory.

Such are, then, the particular offices which have special rules attached to them in our holy Institute, because it was considered more befitting that they should be filled by our lay-brothers. But there are other offices to which no fixed rules have been given, because, without despising these occupations and without any injury to the house, strangers may be employed to perform their duties, and can either come and work in our houses, or else work in their own homes and bring to the house what they have done.

Thus, it is of course necessary that the community be every day supplied with bread, but it need not of necessity be made and baked in the house. Besides, nothing is more necessary than a shoemaker, and yet there are many houses in which for several years there was no idea of setting up a shoemaker's shop, while other houses have no brother gardener, though they have a garden. And yet, in order to complete the second part of my book, and do equal justice to all, I propose giving some short recommendations to those of our brothers who may be charged with the offices of baker, shoemaker, and gardener; while I will devote one article to those who work in our houses and glorify God in their workshops in handling the saw and the plane.

OFFICE OF BROTHER BAKER.

It is to make you very watchful and charitable, and above all a great lover of recollection and silence, that the Superiors have chosen you for this office of baker, an office both important and highly thought of in a religious house where all the bread is made for the community. Without constant vigilance and attention the bread which you bake, and which is destined to preserve the strength and health of those who work in the vineyard of our Lord, will either not be good or not equally well prepared; one day it may be well baked, another day badly made, and this to the real injury of your brothers, and dissatisfaction of the Superior, and of God Himself, for where one is dissatisfied the other is also. If you allow yourself to go to sleep, or think too late of preparing the yeast, if the oven is not thoroughly heated, or if, being pressed for time you put in too much wood, your bread will be burnt and flattened out, but not baked, and hence there will be served out at table a lump of wet and heavy dough, half dressed, disagreeable to the taste, and almost impossible of digestion. Judge if the poor of Jesus Christ will be content, or the Superior have reason to be satisfied, after having done all he could to provide the best possible flour for you, in order that you might make for his children bread both nourishing and excellent in quality.

But this fault will affect yourself still more seriously, unless, indeed, you can plead the excuse of ignorance, for past experience should have already taught you how such unfortunate results might have been prevented. If, however, you have not yet learnt the art, so that it has not been through sleepiness, but through want of knowledge and of practice that you have failed to knead out or bake your bread properly, you should, in that case, learn what you have to do from some baker of more capacity and experience. At all events be docile, and work with ardour until you make yourself perfect, and do not imagine that it is delicacy in eating or unreasonable exactness which makes the Superior continue to find fault, till you have learnt to serve up really good bread. It is perfectly certain that St. Ephrasie, relative of the Emperor Theodosius, and that Brother John de Valence, of the Order of St. Jerome, also sprung from a royal race, would have never judged in this way, nor have complained of Superiors for asking them, as a duty to God, to do their very best in an office which both of these filled for a long time, with so much care and fervour through love to Jesus Christ.

Try to copy them, my brother, and do so with all the more ardour from the fact that your office is a very hard and fatiguing one, and that especially true of you is the Divine command : *Thou shalt eat bread in the sweat of thy brow*. Be careful not to spare one precious drop of that sweat, particularly when it flows for the poor who come to our gates, and who will receive, at your hands, the nourishment you have provided.

And it is in this that your charity should show itself,

and also because what is done for the poor is in reality and of right done for Jesus Christ. You will prove the faith and love which you have for His poor, in baking your bread with still more care and zeal when you reflect that you do it for ours. Tell our good Jesus that you are poor yourself, and that you have nothing which you can give Him, but that the sweat, which runs down from your brow, and which drains the strength you have received from Him, this you offer to Him in acknowledgment of all His benefits ; and, since He is so good as to recompense in us the offer of His own gifts, and has promised us eternal life in exchange for a cup of water given in His name, so do you pray Him that He will one day grant this to you, and enable you to contemplate in heaven His infinite beauty, that He may be Himself the food of your soul for ever, as you have now the desire to nourish Him by your labour, and to comfort Him in His poor.

To increase these sentiments in your breast, and make them ascend to God by the fervour of your ejaculatory prayers and spiritual songs, which will also help to make your work lighter and your fatigue sweeter to bear, you should practise carefully recollection and silence in the place where you work. If another is appointed to assist you, lead him on to work in the same spirit, and encourage him by your example and a few useful words to become, according to your desire, a workman both holy and perfect, so as to merit that the holy Virgin should console and strengthen him in his toil, though not, perhaps, in the same visible manner as that in which she appeared to St. Catharine of Sienna. Up to the age

of eighty-four Blessed Brother Augustine Pietrasanta worked with great energy in the office of baker, but with a fire of love beaming from his eyes which the flames of the furnace only heightened; and in reward for all his labours when, many years after his death, God permitted that his body should be uncovered, it was found that, while the rest of his body had crumbled away into dust, his hands remained uncorrupted, and retained by miracle all their freshness.

OFFICE OF BROTHER SHOEMAKER.

My good brother, St. Crispin and St. Crispinian were of noble birth, and citizens of Rome, and to avoid the fury of the persecution raised against those who professed the faith of Jesus Christ, they left their native city and came to Soissons, a town in France. There they opened a shoemaker's shop and became great Saints, or, at least, having been saintly in their lives before, there they sanctified themselves still more in their daily occupation. So you see there is nothing upon this earth which cannot help towards our salvation and perfection, not even the handling of the shoemaker's awl, knife, and strap.

The great secret of our sanctification lies in the intention by which we direct the use of things indifferent in themselves; and since for religious nothing is really indifferent, because everything done under

obedience bears the seal of virtue and has no other end but the glory of God, towards whom it tends with all the strength of our will, so it follows that in working with the instruments of your office you can become a saint, greater even than were St. Crispin and St. Crispinian, who did not join any religious body. May it be your whole desire thus to glorify God, and each time you begin to work, or take your place on the bench, accompany in thought by your prayers, on all their apostolic travels, those who have to walk through thorns and briars in the shoes which you are making for them. Say to God that you wish to offer Him a soul, nay, a thousand, a million souls for each stitch which you make, each stroke of the hammer; and see that you never lay aside so holy a practice, as though it were an act of fervour to last only for a little time. I put you all the more on your guard, for it cannot be denied that your work is laborious, in the first place on account of the nature of the materials you have got to handle, the leather, &c.; and in the next, you have to be constantly seated; the work itself is hard and fatiguing, and there is besides the difficulty of pleasing every one, though I have no doubt you wish to do so most sincerely.

Success in this point requires all your patience; failure requires the practice of still greater patience. And so, whichever way you turn, patience and mortification will always be your faithful companions, and the foundation, as it were, of your whole office; and if, during long years and even to your death, you should fill this office with unchangeable calm and

endurance, you will have deserved many degrees of glory in heaven. Of this I speak with confidence, for it is impossible to possess to perfection this so great virtue, without having all the others required for perfection in your office, more particularly the love of poverty and interior recollection.

Before cutting a piece of leather you must examine it several times, in order to see how, and at what part of it you should commence, for this is a point requiring great accuracy, and all the profit to be gained from having the work done in the house, depends on the use of your knife, and on your prudence in handling it. I would not have you abandon the attempt to cut a shoe out of a piece of leather only when you cannot get any kind of shoe out of it, but also when you cannot get a good one, for, after all, these shoes are made for religious who should always be sent out in a decent state to present themselves before the world, and to your care and skill they look for this. Speak in time, and keep begging repeatedly that shoes be brought to you on the very first signs of being worn out, for if they are not mended at that stage they will be brought to you too late. Repeat this notice continually, and never tire of doing so, though small attention be paid to it, for even a little gain is something, and unless you remind persons often you will do nothing with those who are given up to study, and never think of their shoes except when they are putting them on. This warning itself, given from a good motive, is a decided act of charity; you should also avoid the practice of passing off as quickly as possible

the oldest shoes in the shop, when you are asked for a pair, nay, you should rather make it your chief point to serve well and satisfy each one who comes to you ; without this attention you will find that those who are less mortified will complain of you, and those who are really mortified will, what is still worse, through their desire not to pain you, walk about limping and suffering terribly from the corns on their feet.

Make a little cell in your heart, knowing that you are destined to pass your life between four stone walls, and there pray, love, and offer your heart to God at the sound of your hammer, and at each stroke with your knife. And those who are not religious, if there be any such working under you, when they see you so recollected and observant of silence, will learn to imitate you ; and thus will you merit a great abundance of gifts in heaven, as did Brother Sulpice Clerici, a Portuguese, who was a shoemaker by profession, and a holy brother on whom our annals pass great praise.

OFFICE OF BROTHER GARDENER.

I believe, my dear brother, that there is not a single virtue, amongst those which form and map out the true spirit of the religious lay-brother, which you are not bound to have and practise, especially if you are not gardener for the house alone, having therefore only to look after the garden within the outer walls of the house, or close to it; but, if you have to go into the country and manage there either a farm or fields, where you have to pass perhaps whole days and weeks in solitude, at a distance from any one.

However this may be, your occupation is as important as it is arduous, one which binds you to very especial fidelity towards both God and man, and to extreme mortification of life. Fidelity will require you to make a firm resolution (especially if you have to work at a considerable distance from the house) that you will on no occasion omit any one of your spiritual exercises: meditation, Mass as often as you can possibly hear it, the two examens, and spiritual reading, your beads, &c.; well assured that these are the only means to protect you from the temptations which your enemy will be certain to raise against you, and which will assail you all the more violently from the fact that you are alone. Keep always your weapons in your hand, and be well guarded in all you do, pre-

sumption invites danger, and has brought about the death of many a soul. Remind yourself frequently of what you owe to the Society your mother, and by an exemplary life preserve undimmed the glory of her title, and this all the more if you are obliged to have any dealings with persons of the other sex.

At the same time also, you must be faithful towards men, in obtaining as much instruction as you can about everything which concerns your office, in order to provide against the influence of the seasons with the utmost care, and to draw from the ground the best possible profit; because God, who leaves second causes to act according to the laws given them, has in some sort and in the excess of His goodness to depend on your efforts, your intelligent care, your labour in digging, ploughing, manuring, sowing, hoeing, watering the ground when necessary; and will condescend to make use of the service of your hands in bestowing on His children His sweetest and most abundant benedictions. He has also Himself promised them to those who seize upon the right time and know how to profit by it; as, on the other hand, He has reserved His maledictions for those who through negligence allow good opportunities to escape them.

It is impossible for you to do the whole work single-handed, but this should make you all the more vigilant in seeing that those who work under you begin at the proper hour, and do not stop but at the times appointed for necessary rest and refreshment. Remember, however, that you will never be permitted to tyrannize over them. Recommend them to the

Superior, that he may grant them some little recompense if they deserve it, for this will give them more heart in their work. Be always foremost in setting a good example, refusing no labour, however hard or humbling it may be, for this will have far more effect than reproaches or long sermons. In acting thus you will lose nothing, but on the contrary be a gainer, like our holy brother John Ximenes, in whose life we read how much he was esteemed by every one, because they saw him every day driving a miserable cart through the town as if he were some poor carrier. Never let others see you engaged in joking and wasting time, while those under you are dripping with heavy perspiration.

Strive always to be gentle instead of cruel to dumb animals; and here I must say a word about the patience which is so necessary in your office on account of its wearisomeness and trials. Thus with regard to the treatment of animals, patience is often very much needed, and by it merit is obtained; do not allow yourself to be easily moved to anger, when, for instance, the ox is often lazy, or the ass restive, or your mule is obstinate, do not allow yourself to utter words that should never have been spoken, nor make any unseemly jest such as you would have never seen in St. Isidore, your patron. If possible, I would advise you to read his life, in which you will find with how great patience and resignation this saint saw the fruits of his labour perishing ere the harvest had come, and perhaps, within an hour, the whole result of the toil of many months gone. He could do this because his pure soul reposed, so to speak, in the bosom of God,

and he could neither love nor desire anything but the good pleasure and will of his Lord.

May this most blessed will of God be also your consolation when you see your dearest hopes pass away. If God, who of Himself as Sovereign Master gives or refuses at His own good pleasure, does not send you in recompense angels to lighten the weight of your toils and to share in the bearing of them, as He did to St. Isidore, He will bestow on you at least robust health for many years, and while your hands grow hard with constant work, your soul will day by day gain new strength and perseverance in acquiring the practice of the virtues of religious life.

I wish you but knew how great progress in every virtue Brother Jerome Orteç made, whilst in the poor College of Ubeda he filled the same office as yourself. Often, in order to force an ill-tempered ass to do its work, the good brother carried his humility so far as to fasten himself to the cart by the side of this troublesome animal, the only one he could get to help him in his labour, and though we can scarcely believe it, he worked on in this way in the fields. To reward a humility, a charity, and a patience thus admirable, God after the second year made the farm so productive as to be sufficient to support the few fathers of the house, which it had been decided just before to close for want of the very necessities of life. I pray the God of heaven to give you the spirit of the same virtues.

OFFICES OF BROTHER CARPENTER, LOCKSMITH,
AND MASON.

For you, my dear brothers, who have read what I have written up to this point, I have but a few words to add, since amongst the virtues proper to other offices you are able easily to find those which become you in especial.

Of all the virtues which lay-brothers are called upon to practise, there are two which I would particularly recommend to you, if you wish to correspond to the desires of the Superiors who employ you in the house at these manual works. These are, first, the love of work ; and secondly, a scrupulous care in practising holy poverty ; I say scrupulous not because I consider anything connected with scruples to be virtue, but because I would have you work at these employments with such diligence that every one who sees you would imagine you to be scrupulous, even when you are not so. The wood, iron, copper, lime, everything in fact which you use in your work costs money, perhaps a good deal ; and since they have to be continually used, especially in a large and, as often happens, old house, you can understand that they are a more than ordinary expense, which might become even a serious burden if you did not really and carefully study to observe poverty. Do not trust too much to the excuse that you waste but little, very little ; for, by

the addition of many small quantities of wax, you might come in the end to make a fine paschal candle.

If the remembrance of what you owe to God and the Society in this matter does not of itself keep your eyes well awake to this point, try to think that when you break by accident a good plank of wood, when you waste a quantity of nails, when you throw away pieces of iron, when you put too much paint or varnish on the walls, when you burn tons of coal to no purpose, if you have been so regardless of expense in your poor workshop, and if you have taken so little care of the small resources which you have to draw upon, there will always have been some one there who will have carefully noticed everything, and who will make the remark that whole families might have been nourished with that which you have so lightly wasted. What disorder! what misfortune! God forbid that such a thing should happen in any of our houses. But certainly this could never happen if we but remembered the expression used by St. Basil in speaking of the furniture and different articles that are used in religious houses, that we must look upon them as sacred vessels.

And now, upon the subject of the love of work what more is there that I can say to you, after all that I have already written in the second part? Do you know, my good brothers, how much it may cost the house to feed, clothe, and nurse you should you feel sick? Are you aware that your work cannot count for much compared with these expenses, because as religious you are called upon so often to interrupt it for the duties belonging to your vocation, for your

own spiritual exercises and those of the community? Unless then, by your ardour for work and diligence in performing it, you strain every nerve to make up for these interruptions, to give at least as many hours as an outside workman would do, one who is not hindered as you are, the consequences are evident; and I will put them before you with all clearness through the tender love which I have for you, and which both of us should feel towards our mother, the Society. These consequences are that you will not gain as much as your food and the other expenses which you cost will come to, and that hence you bring an actual loss upon the Society your mother, both a loss and an injury for which you will have to answer at the tribunal of God.

And yet do not suppose I mean, what it would be unjust to expect, that in a shorter number of hours you should do more work than an artizan in the world, who has more time at his disposal. Some could do this, in truth; but others could not. He who can, should do it; and all of you should exert yourselves to try and reach that point. But what saddens and depresses the heart is to see, that in exactly the same time and under the same circumstances, counting hours and minutes, and comparing one man's work with another, it is generally the religious who does less, though he has consecrated himself to God to take heaven by violence at the price of his sweat, and gain it as the recompense of his labours. Ah! how triumphantly will the workmen of this world raise their voices against you, some day, when the hour comes for manifesting the justice of God! Reflect

well on this, my brothers ; yes, meditate on it, for it is a serious question.

I wish that those of our brothers, who offices I have not had time to speak of, would consider carefully all these matters. In a religious house some are especially charged with sweeping, or with care of the lamps, others are required at times to shave or to cut hair, others are employed in binding books, in painting or gilding, as printers or lithographers, in a word in all kinds of trade. Nay, we may even have amongst us photographers, marble-cutters, sculptors, architects, metal-workers, engravers, and engineers, &c. Let all of these keep before their minds that the grand office they are called upon to fill in religion is the office of Martha ; and if they are artists they must be ready to sacrifice cheerfully on the altar of their vocation all the exercise and instruments of their art, and to take up the apron and the broom . . . in order that all may work and exert themselves for the glory and love of a God, who never allows Himself to be surpassed in generosity, and who in return for one hour of labour and fatigue, has bound Himself to give them an eternity of repose in the realms of happiness and rest. May this indeed be so.

FOURTH PART.

On religious politeness.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

By politeness or civility is meant the manner in which men should conduct themselves towards each other in their general intercourse, being careful to avoid anything which could either wound or offend. Quintillian seems to have well defined it, when he said, that kindness, in the habits of every day life, always avoids with care each word or action that is troublesome, disagreeable, or unbecoming.

Hence it follows that everything that could cause annoyance, or could displease those with whom we live and converse, is an act of rudeness and breach of manners. On the contrary, we give the name of *courtesy*, politeness, and civility to all becoming intercourse with others. The word itself is taken from the manners of persons who live in courts and in the chief towns, and have acquired good habits from mixing in the best society, in which those of good birth and education agree to avoid certain things not

absolutely wrong in themselves, or perhaps allowable when a person is alone, but which are not really permitted in the society of those of the best class.

Now, it is of this very manner of life and conversation in the world that I wish to speak to you, my dear brothers, in my desire to give you the highest polish and the last touch of the brush which will make you truly to be, in justification of the title of this book, perfect lay-brothers.

Let us, however, pause a little, for I seem to hear one of my readers saying to me : What indeed, is it not to become a saint that I have entered religion, and for nothing else ; as to the matter of learning politeness and civility, would I not have learnt that better by remaining in the world ! All that is very well for the world itself, we have enough to do here to serve God in a plain and humble way, for God loves to treat with honest men, who do not stand upon so much ceremony, nor pay so many compliments.

All this is very true, my dear brother, and yet none the less do I believe that the great doctor spoke the truth when he said : God does not at all love saints that are rude, coarse in manner, and rough as the bark of the cork tree. *God abhors saints without civility.* And do you know why He does not love them ? Because, though they may appear saints outwardly, and though they doubtless flatter themselves that they are such, and others as unformed in true sanctity as themselves think them to be saints, they altogether differ from true saints, because they are without the three essential virtues of sanctity, to wit,

humility, charity, and both interior and exterior mortification.

Do you see then that the objection, which you lately made, might have some force if we wished you to make yourselves remarkable amongst others for a certain air of politeness and civility, and for an over-refined courtliness which could be assumed only by persons living in the treacherous atmosphere of the world ; but this kind of politeness God will not have, so far from it, He commands us to leave it behind at the door of His house. This false money cannot be passed amongst us.

The politeness of the world, when it gets the name of virtue, is nothing better than false money compared to the politeness which ought to prevail and shine forth amongst the children of God, and if they resemble one another a little in form and colour, and other accidents of the mere exterior, they are very far from resembling each other in substance and value, for the one is struck in the mint of vanity and selfishness, but the other comes from the perfect model of the three virtues of which I have just spoken ; humility, charity, and mortification.

But again I see you deep in reflection, and though you do not venture to say anything, I know what is passing in your mind, for you think that in this case more would be gained by discoursing of humility, charity, and interior mortification, than of all these observances and acts of politeness. Ah ! for once you are right, and have reason so much on your side that if I could feel as assured of your sound judgment as of your goodwill, I could entirely trust to your

discernment to guide you in all the particular cases and particular affairs of life, I would have no more to do than refer you to the admirable treatises of Rodriguez on these three virtues, nor would I require to over-exert myself in trying to make you polished, courteous, and well trained men.

It is true that our Lord Jesus Christ, the exact model to us of each perfection and virtue, has left us instructions on these three virtues, without speaking directly of civility or politeness, while at the same time all who follow the lessons of this holy Master manifest their good training, and become like to God, whom St. Bonaventure describes as most perfect in all His actions, *the Lord of infinite refinement*. It is certain that the religion which He taught to men is a perfect system of education, and we have evident proof of it in the fact that Catholics are on this point immeasurably more advanced than others, and have this character stamped on their minds by their very Catholicity itself. All this is very certain, but it is not less true that the most religious of men, the most charitable, the most humble and mortified are capable of committing faults, serious faults, as to politeness and courtesy, either through want of discernment to see what may wound and displease others, or else because such persons being often abstracted and careful in the practice of recollection, so as to be nearly in a state of ecstasy, give at the time no attention whatever to what is passing around them.

The great Arsenius, who used to cross his legs, was constantly offending and wounding the feelings of the monks with whom he lived, when seated in the midst

of them. Now Arsenius was assuredly a person of great excellence, virtue, and charity, yet in spite of his great merit he found himself obliged to give up this bad habit, thanks to the ingenious contrivance of the father abbot. Every one knows the story of this little lesson, which must have made him blush, and from which he could easily have saved himself if he had read any book or manual on civility, as that would have given him those useful hints that come of good education and the practice of the domestic virtues.

Read, therefore, my dear brothers, what I now offer to you, commencing with a few general rules.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL RULES OF POLITENESS.

I SHALL quote only a few rules, each one however of which is of very great importance.

1. Try, in the first place, to make yourself agreeable to every one, without seeking your own ends, preferring in every lawful matter the desires and interests of others to your own ; and in this you must attain the point of fearing, and having a horror of, whatever might displease or cause any discomfort to your neighbour.

2. Take note of all that could wound or displease yourself in the manner of others, in their words,

actions, or general behaviour, that you in your turn may avoid these points with care; and to this study add the other one of observing attentively all that pleases you in these same persons, that you may copy them on such points.

3. You may never neglect, nor grow remiss in this exercise of civility and politeness in all its relations, whether as regards superiors, inferiors, or equals. See that your bearing be always dignified and becoming, even when you are alone in your own room, so as at no time to forget religious gravity, and the reserve proceeding from self-watchfulness which befits you; this perfect modesty will enable you to escape all indiscretion and all rudeness.

These are the only means of forming habits which neither the greatest distractions nor the most sudden surprises can essentially change in your exterior: but as this, the most important of the three general rules, contains several points, I add three particular recommendations which will make their practice more simple and easy.

1. Endeavour to make a clear distinction between those things which nature herself pronounces becoming, and those which even nature condemns.

2. Distinguish also between the things which usage or custom allows you to practise, and those which she condemns and disallows.

3. Never on any account confound familiarity with politeness, nor with coarseness, for these are very different from each other.

Let me now prove to you the importance of these three recommendations.

However little mind or intelligence a person may have, he cannot help seeing and remarking that there are some things, and some actions, which the simple instinct of nature leads us always to conceal ; and he would expose himself to the reputation with society of being badly brought up, and the most ignorant man in the world, who would make no effort to obey so wise an instinct, still more who would go against it. There are other actions purely natural, but for which we do not blush, and which we do not hide, such as eating, drinking, spitting, coughing, sneezing, &c. . . . Now, as to actions, which like these are common to us with the lower animals, nature teaches us to be as different as we can in our manner of doing them from the brute animals, for by this we show the excellence and the superiority of our condition ; she requires of us most imperiously that we do these acts with the greatest decency and propriety possible. You see then how vast a field opens out before you, in which you have to study the manner of conducting yourself in those matters which are purely natural.

There are other points which do not depend on nature, and which she has not herself introduced into society, but which are, so to speak, in constant use. These are so many points mutually agreed upon amongst men, and are used as occasions of manifesting feelings of respect or veneration, submission or deference that belong to the question of politeness ; thus to uncover the head, to give way that another may pass first, to give another the first place in a room, in visiting or when sitting at table to place a person on the right, to yield to them the inner part

of the pavement in the street, and other points of the like kind.

Now though nature is not directly concerned with these details, and hence is not in these things our guide or mistress, yet such points have their place so necessarily in a good education and in the observance of politeness, that if a man were, for instance, not to raise his hat in acknowledging the bow of another, even though he may be in a decidedly inferior position, that man would be called ignorant and ill instructed.

From this you can learn, my dear brother, whether it is useful or not to pay a little attention to these matters, in order to know what those practices are which custom has consecrated in the world, as marks of good breeding.

With respect to the third recommendation, I wish to explain the difference between familiarity, politeness, and coarseness ; for it is necessary you should know that there are circumstances in which familiarity might be most becoming and pleasing, while under others it might as easily be most rude and offensive. You should understand then at once, in order to know how to behave, that familiarity is a sort of becoming liberty in which persons of the same condition indulge towards each other, when speaking or engaged in the other relations of life ; this liberty, by tacit consent on both sides, presumes that what would otherwise give offence if viewed in too strict a light, will, under the circumstances, be taken in good part.

You should moreover observe that all the relations between man and man are either of equal to equal,

or of an inferior to his superior, or a superior towards his inferior; and such persons either know each other very well and for a long time, or they have very little, perhaps no acquaintance with one another. Between equals if well acquainted familiarity is quite allowable, if but little known to each other, it becomes coarseness and folly. In the case of an inferior towards his superior, whether he be much or little known to him, familiarity and freedom shock one, except in matters of special order or at least permission, and even then there should always be precaution and reserve lest the permission be withdrawn. If the person concerned is a superior, whom we scarcely know except by sight, familiarity would be an act of insolence and coarseness. You can now judge how important it is to have a clear and exact idea of the circumstances which permit, and of those which forbid familiarity, so as to avoid making stupid mistakes. A fuller explanation of these circumstances shall be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

ON FAMILIARITY.

THE surest proof that a person both knows and observes the principles of good breeding is to be found in the manner of his behaviour towards equals ; for it is evident that, in our relations with Superiors, fear or natural timidity is generally sufficient to check the manifestation of incivility and forwardness.

It is true that towards equals we may safely dispense with what one calls ceremony, and may omit common formalities and empty compliments, we may even go to the length of a certain amount of familiarity ; but we must remember, all the while, that there are many different sorts and degrees of familiarity.

The first of these is opposed to nature, and is to be found only amongst men who have lost all moral sense and all care for their own reputation, if in intercourse with their equals they do not refrain from what sins against propriety. But, thanks be to God, there is no question of this when talking of religious.

There is another kind of familiarity, which sometimes serves as a pretext for taking on every occasion, and choosing with the fullest liberty, whatever is most agreeable and most convenient for oneself ; and which, in order to attain the end in view, does not at all distress itself if this is done at the expense of

others. And so their kindness and their politeness becomes abused. A great impropriety assuredly ! A liberty, this, both wounding to others and unworthy of a right feeling mind, but how much more unworthy of a religious.

There is yet another kind which is equally a mark and an effect of friendship, and which is the only familiarity that men of good condition allow themselves towards their equals, and it is a kind becoming even in a religious ; for, if in the world we see that men love one another, the same should be found above all amongst brothers united to each other by the same vows and the same vocation.

It is this familiarity which leads us to avoid, with our utmost care, everything which could displease or cause vexation in others, and makes us seek, on the contrary, to do everything that can be agreeable to them. This sweet familiarity leads men to esteem and honour each other, not out of ceremony, but in holy and fraternal friendship, always directed by those two laws which resolve themselves into one, the law of charity : *Do not to another that which you would not that he should do to you ; and do to your neighbour that which you would that he should do to you.*

And truly, my brother, if in order to live always as we ought and observe a perfect politeness towards our superiors this one rule be sufficient, namely, that we know how in everything to consider them more than we do ourselves ; the same ought to suffice for our preserving the perfection of civility towards our equals, namely, that we consider them truly as we do ourselves.

But you must resolve to be content with nothing less than this; and St. Ignatius, certainly not a man without education, was most anxious that his children should never forget such wise laws, for he wished us to be saints for the world and for society, and not saints belonging to the desert, or hermits. Wherefore then this great earnestness of his? I will tell you. Our holy Founder was too skilful a marksman not to know that the missile always strikes a little below the point aimed at, and so, as may be easily seen in many passages of the Institute, and in the Spiritual Exercises, he aims a little higher than his mark. Thus in the well known meditation on the three degrees of humility, he wishes us to mount as high as the third degree, and he proposes it to us as our aim, in the eleventh rule of the Summary; he wishes us to aspire to that point with all our soul, in order that through the strength of our desires we may accomplish at least the half of a journey which leads to the summit of all sanctity, for there are but few who can make out the whole way.

It is the same with the subject which now occupies us, in order to gain the point of treating your equals as you do yourself, habituate yourself to look upon them as your superiors, and with admirable wisdom this great Saint bids us to show to each one in particular, with religious simplicity, the respect and veneration which his rank and position require. Mark you how he aims higher than the exact spot he intends to strike.

We have then clearly established the fact that our Father has not condemned moderate familiarity

becoming to his children. But has he not forbidden friendships? I felt sure you would ask me this question, and though it will take me a little aside from the path traced out for me in this chapter, I would rather reply to you at once, as this is a more interesting point than you may perhaps yourself imagine.

For I wish here to tell you that our holy Founder, and the Society inspired by his spirit and springing from his heart, were of necessity bound to condemn, and have in point of fact condemned, everything which by its nature is worthy of blame in religious houses, and religious communities; and of this we shall speak in due order.

In the first place, we condemn and forbid in the Society that which is commonly known by the name of particular friendships, a most undoubted plague in communities, and a principle destructive of the union of hearts and of wills which is their strength, and which union St. Ignatius so well describes in the forty-second and forty-third rules of the Summary. The particular friendship of which I speak, is a union more or less intimate between two persons, or between a few persons only, in which God has no part. Imagine to yourselves then whether the Society has not good enough reasons for forbidding such a union as this.

Do not think that I am exaggerating when I say that God is not with them, for such friendships spring from a feeling which is most assuredly not inspired by virtue; they flow from mere character, caprice, sensibility, or sympathy. They are fed not by the desire of contributing to the mutual perfection of

souls, but by a sort of craving to speak to one towards whom we have this attraction, and whom little by little the heart makes its idol, to which it will soon go the length of rendering that homage which is due only to God, and consequences may easily follow that are fatal both to one friend and the other.

This point is reached when a friendship is formed that does not simply lead up to the altar and no farther, that is to say, only so far as to those things which cannot offend God, cannot wound the conscience, and which give no occasion to commit faults either against charity to our other brothers, or obedience and respect towards Superiors or their orders, or in fine, against the observance of a thousand little rules, to the scandal of those who may remark it, and to the violation of religious discipline.

Private friendship also leads to the same extreme point, when in order not to afflict this friend, and yet fearing, on the other hand, to offend God, a man begins to argue and examine points every day in the mind, till at length a sort of conscience is formed for himself, in which, completely or in part, the interior voice is silenced that cries out: *This is not lawful*. Or else, closing the ear of the heart to the Divine voice, he plays with the fire, he nourishes in his breast a thousand young serpents, that cause no fear at first because they have not yet got their teeth, but that have within them the power of striking death after awhile into the heart so imprudent as to cherish them.

Already you have some idea of this, but well though

you may understand it in principle, our good and tender mother the Society, whose provident love extends far beyond what the inexperience of her poor children would think possible, stifles this fire, she crushes these vile serpents, she checks and denounces this kind of friendship; with watchful eye she examines, she detects these feelings in their source in order that she may smother them at their birth, if they are not in every respect good, or if the slightest danger lurks within them. None could know better than she does how to recognise them, because from the heart of a mother nothing can be hid. She detects beforehand everything which could injure her children. It is important for you to be well convinced of this that you may hasten in good time to seek her help and protection, to disclose to her all the longings, all the desires of your heart, from the very first moment. Read with attention the treatise of Father Alphonsus Rodriguez, and you will see what he says on so important a subject. In the Society, as in all well governed religious Orders, no private friendships of any kind are tolerated, unless perhaps in certain very rare and unusual cases, which I will describe afterwards, and should you have on this point any unsound views held in strong opposition, you must absolutely lay them aside altogether, or else entirely change their nature.

Friendship is then the mutual union of hearts between two persons of equal footing, a union founded on virtue, with the communication of what belongs to each. Every kind of esteem and praise has been pronounced upon friendship; she is regarded

as the greatest of all blessings, as a gift come down from heaven : "He who hath found a true friend hath found a treasure."* Many authors have written on this subject, I will content myself with recommending to you the book of St. Francis of Sales.

With what sweetness of expression, in what tender words, with how great delicacy of treatment does not this holy Saint write to his beloved Philothea, in all that tenderness and unalloyed pleasure which flow from a friendship truly worthy of the name. Take the nineteenth chapter of the third part of his *Introduction to a Devout Life*, headed "True friendships;" and then tell me if you are not powerfully drawn by the perfume of this delicate flower, if you are not filled with a holy envy at the thought of these souls united by such gentle ties as the Saint proposes to you for your model.

But perhaps you refuse, for you say that the Saint did not address himself to you, and that he did not say these things for you. I answer, listen at least to the words which he writes to Philothea : "It may be that many of you will say, we ought to have no kind of affection or friendship in particular, because it occupies the heart, distracts the mind, and sows the seed of envy, but they are misled in the advice which they give. Doubtless they have read in the works of many Saints and holy writers that particular friendships and exaggerated affections do incalculable harm to religious, and they hastily conclude that it is the same with all other positions in life, but there is much to be said on this point. For, in the case

* Eccclus. vi. 14.

of a well regulated monastery the common aim of all tends to true devotion, and there is no need to hold these especial communications, for fear lest in seeking that in a more particular way which is sought in common, one may glide from what is a particular friendship into a private and personal friendship. But in respect of those living in the world and who yet follow the path of true virtue, it is necessary for them to ally themselves one with another in a holy and sacred friendship, since it is by means of this that they encourage, help and advance each other in holiness. And as those who are walking on smooth ground have no need of a helping hand, whereas they who pass over dangerous and slippery ground assist in keeping each other up : so those who are in religion have no need of particular friendships, but they who are living in the world find these a necessity, in order to help and support one another along the dangerous paths through which they must make their way. In the world all are not pushing on for the same end, all are not of the same spirit ; pious persons must then of necessity draw aside a little, and form mutual friendships for the reasons that we have been giving ; and such a particular tie as this evidently establishes a holy attraction, which causes no other disunion than that between good and evil, between the sheep and the goats, the bees and the drones, a separation most necessary." I have given you the passage at length from the pen of this holy advocate for true friendships.

Well now, my good brother, what think you? Have you in a well ordered convent, in a house, or in a college of the Society, found a gate opened to

admit evil? Have you met there either the goats or the drones of which the great Saint writes? And what, if through the mercy of God there is no motive at work except for good, no other spring of action, no other agent or power stirring this grand machinery, if this makes up the whole end and aspiration of all hearts? What then, if there are none there but docile sheep, gentle and submissive, which, guided by the much-loved crook of their one and only Shepherd, know and obey no other voice but His, do not run hither and thither like goats at the call of their appetites, nor look out capriciously for other pasturages? What, if there are none there but hard-working bees, who having all the same end and the same means, and who being without any difference amongst them except the strength, more or less great, that the grace of heaven imparts to them, labour incessantly and without relaxing beneath the bright rays of the Divine glory, with so great regularity, so much similarity, that there is not a single hive in which the bees can have closer resemblance one to the other!

Draw for yourself the conclusion that naturally follows from observations which you can have made as easily as myself, and it will be the same which Father Jerome Platus made in his admirable book on *The Happiness of the Religious State*, that if there is a state of holiness and happiness in the whole world, it is the state of religion, precisely because it is there only one can find true love and friendship, fruit of perfect equality, and because there is nothing so delightful as that profound and intimate affection which unites religious persons to one another, an affection which

grows and multiplies itself in proportion to the number of those whom it unites. Nor could this be otherwise, seeing that our Lord has promised the hundred-fold, we would expect Him to recompense the sacrifice one has made to Him in renouncing the world and its false friendships, by bestowing happiness a hundred times greater and sweeter in this perfect union of hearts.

And truly what better thing can there be than to love one's Superiors, showing always the respect that is due to them, and which perfectly agrees with loving them? And may not this affection equal, and even surpass the love which exists between father and son in the order of nature? Or, what sweeter or more just than to love one's brothers in the same vocation, and to be beloved by them in return? In this daily intercourse so holy, and this mutual communication in all heavenly blessings, may there not be a true friendship greatly excelling the union which nature and blood seem to form amongst children of the same family? And the happiness of calling each other by the sweet name of brother, is that too not most properly granted to the members of these religious families.

Yes, my dear brother, such is the religious life in which we all belong to one another in a perfect equality; and if in this affection one could be preferred to another, surely it must be he who being the holiest, the most perfect, and the richest in Divine graces, deserves to be the most esteemed and the most loved. There would be in this, we would say, only a just recompense for the good that he cannot

fail to do us in helping us to serve God yet more faithfully by the example of his life and virtues. Still the very wisest precautions will be necessary to avoid the exterior manifestation of these sentiments of particular affection and esteem for any one of ours, because that would be to violate the rights of others.

But now, do there exist such cases as would make this preference perfectly justifiable? I answer, very rarely in a religious community, and were it ever to occur I give you due notice that before God could bless such a friendship, or the Society be prepared not to condemn it, it must of necessity bear the especial stamp of heaven proving that it is God Himself who has inspired it, for it is something so exceedingly wonderful, that scarcely in a hundred years will a single example of it be found.

The union of those two beautiful souls, Blessed Peter Claver and Blessed Brother Alphonsus Rodriguez, is an exception which proves the general rule. During the whole time this kind of friendship lasts, it seems to possess the singular privilege not only of confirming them both in good, but also of increasing in their hearts the love and the charity which they bear towards their brothers in religion. For your own guidance I would say neither desire nor aim at any exception to any rule whatever; and, if you would have peace of soul both in life and in death, love God perfectly, and, as He commands you, love perfectly your Superiors and all those who live with you and form this holy family.

I have now said quite enough on the subject of friendships, indeed I have written more than I at

first intended, since it is only in passing, and as by accident, that I have put the matter before you at all. Let us return then to the point which we left, in order that I may show you what is opposed to familiarity when used in the good sense.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE HABIT OF JOKING.

HOWEVER good, spiritual, or pious a lay-brother may be, and in however holy a manner he may wish to pass the time of ordinary recreation, it is impossible that he can be so unbending as never to utter some joke to his neighbour, either in order to amuse those who are listening, or to reply to one who may have passed the word, for amongst equals this is of frequent and almost habitual occurrence, and for this reason it appears to me useful to say a few words on the subject. We may as well commence with a definition of it.

A joke or pleasantry, or bit of delicate raillery, is some pithy word, some droll and comic expression intended to put an agreeable and amusing thought before the mind, without the slightest wound either to modesty or civility, and without hurting the person to whom it is addressed. The abuse of terms, which is so common, has however given a wider signification to this expression, and thus a man is said to be only

joking and laughing, when he imitates or mimics the fault or vice, either real or imaginary, of another ; whether he does this distinctly and clearly, or merely by copying his gestures and behaviour. This last kind of joking is, believe me, wholly unworthy of well educated persons, and you must abandon it once for all, as there is but slight difference between pleasantry of that sort and the actual injury of another's character, an act not to be tolerated in a religious.

As for that other kind I first mentioned, you may from time to time indulge in it, for it is altogether innocent and admissible into the conversation of refined and religious men ; but the difficulty is in knowing how to direct these pleasantries with address.

One point to be carefully understood is, that to joke is not to act the buffoon, nor to say cutting things on every occasion, nor to launch out little sayings more or less common and unmeaning, such as are drawn often from the lowest sources. A really good style of joke consists in saying something original, bright, or even refined, according to the class of the persons present, or of him who speaks. The expression should at one and the same time surprise and please, it should draw its point from some exact and fitting allusion, and, above all, it must not be forced nor dragged in by the hair.

To secure success in this, considerable liveliness and discretion are requisite, indeed, in the absence of these two qualities, joking becomes very difficult and heavy. Thus, my good brother, if your own experience or the charitable advice of a friend suggests

to you that you are one of those who, when they wish to joke, seem to be aiming heavy stones at another's head, and if your mind be too slow in thought to take in the different meanings of words, or your tongue not quick enough to bring out their point, I would counsel you, for the love of God, to renounce all joking, and seek rather to preserve on every occasion your reputation of being a truly wise and serious character; otherwise I foresee no better fate for you than to find the joke, that you risked against another, recoil on your own head, amid the laughter of all present it is true, but at the expense also of the blundering fellow who has missed his aim.

Another obstacle to the success of our jokes is when we meet with people, who hear them well enough, and yet do not see nor take the joke, who will not, as we say, take the radish by the leaves, nor the asparagus by the thick end. How many men of this sort have you seen in the world; I myself have often met such, men who have their heads twisted round and enjoy the singular privilege of viewing everything the wrong way, and of giving a false and mischievous meaning to whatever is said in simplicity, and with the best intentions in the world; and that which annoys me most is, that such persons are in general great boasters of their own superior wit, and even when you tell them of their error, they remain just as obstinate and infatuated about themselves as before.

There is much difficulty in freeing ourselves from this annoyance, seeing that the earth is full of such moles. Since, then, we cannot get on happily in any

other way, I advise you, my brother, to proceed with great caution, and to bear with the too sensitive feelings of all such persons who will not refrain from repeating stupidly again and again the famous proverb, *Bread is bread, and wine is wine*; nor do you imitate the imprudence and vanity of those who would rather lose a friend than give up a joke, when in truth, for the sake of keeping a friend and for your own interest in not wounding charity and the union which ought to reign between two brothers, it were a hundred, nay a thousand times better to sacrifice all the jokes and all the most delicate pleasantries in the world.

Be careful then in observing the short rules that follow, to prevent your ever giving pain to any one, or passing any jokes that are not good and according to the spirit of politeness.

1. In general, it is not becoming to point any jest so as to fall upon individuals, either on those who are alive and may be present, or on the dead and absent, who can neither reply nor defend themselves.

2. Neither slander nor a strong spirit of satire should be allowed in your jokes, for religion, civility, and prudence, all these, equally forbid your introducing into your remarks any envenomed expressions which might wound the heart of a neighbour. Nor would this be only a passing evil, it is too generally the source of endless miseries.

3. When a pleasantry attacks any one in particular, great difference must always be made between little defects or voluntary peculiarities, and those which are not so. Thus it would be in the worst possible

taste, nay absolutely wrong, to laugh at any one because he is hunchbacked, or is a cripple, or is marked with the small-pox, or with any other natural defect, for in no case is this his fault. As regards defects, even those which are voluntary, you should be very cautious, and distinguish between exterior and interior defects, as persons are less touchy about the latter than the former. Generally speaking, a man does not feel so much a slight piece of raillery which speaks of him as an original, one who does odd things, as he would feel the accusation of being awkward, or cowardly, or selfish.

4. Of this one thing I will once for all assure you, that though to be an amusing man and to be a prudent man are not absolutely irreconcilable characters, yet it is a sufficiently difficult point to make them fit in together. It is very difficult to joke often and always successfully; the safest course is to indulge in it rarely, to make use of good sayings as we take a little salt to season our food, and never to lose sight of these words of the Holy Spirit: "A man wise in words shall make himself beloved, but the pleasantries of fools shall be poured out."

I must, however, bring this matter to a close, though the subject is too extensive to be easily exhausted, yet as I am addressing myself to my brothers in religion, I think I may sum up all in a few words. May he, who feels he has received from God the precious gift of knowing how to live in peace with his brethren and to gain their hearts, render thanks to God for all His benefits, preserving himself always in a sound moderation. For a loving fami-

liarity, far from being hurtful, will be always like the soft breeze refreshing souls along the way of perfection, and will recompense them for all the sacrifices which the religious vocation demands. While he, who has not yet received this precious gift from heaven should pray for it incessantly with full confidence of obtaining it, since it is a most important grace, and carries with it the possession of all the domestic virtues. Without it God cannot be pleased, and the religious family will be no longer distinguished from ordinary families in the world, except in the number of its members. It will resemble them especially in those liberties and familiarities which are to be observed in the foolish people of the world, amongst whom a spirit of selfishness and rudeness reigns supreme, from which evil may God for ever preserve our Society.

CHAPTER V.

ON EXTERIOR BEHAVIOUR.

To enable you to understand, my dear brother, how great is the treasure which our holy rules contain for us even in our earthly and domestic life, I am about to give you, with but few alterations, an old commentary on those rules of modesty which cost so much to our holy father, St. Ignatius, and in which he has left us a complete treatise on religious behaviour.

Rule 2. "The head should not be turned this way and that way lightly, but with gravity when need shall require; and if there be no need, it must be held straight, with a little inclination forward, without leaning on either side."

It is certainly very disagreeable to see a person turning his head round at every slight noise, or at the sound of a word, looking about him on all sides full of curiosity to find out what is being done, this is having one's head on a pivot like a weathercock.

To keep the head stiff and lifted up also shocks us, for it gives a man the air of wishing to domineer over others, or to be constantly offering his protection to them. Just as, in the opposite extreme, to bend the head downwards suggests a character far from open; while to cast sidelong glances is the mark of an hypocritical spirit, warning us not to place too much

confidence in it. Hence our rule recommends us to avoid both these excesses.

Rules 3 and 4. "For the most part they should keep their eyes down, neither immoderately lifting them up, nor casting them now one way, now another." "When they converse, especially with men of authority, they should not fix their look upon the eyes, but rather a little below them."

The eyes are the mirror of the soul, on which all the passions that trouble it soon reflect themselves, and as these cannot manifest their presence without giving scandal, it were better to keep the eyes lowered; and besides, in the world even, to look at another from head to foot, and to stare at him right in the face, is considered an insult, because it gives the appearance of a person wishing to penetrate into the secrets of another's heart.

But one must with care avoid all extremes on this point especially, because obstinately to close our eyes when they should be open, might in its turn give rise to more than one inconvenience; as for example, if through such a habit we neglect to salute, or actually jostle up against any one who is passing by, if we cover with wax the person who walks next before us in a procession, or are guilty of a thousand awkwardnesses when serving Mass, such as breaking the cruets, or spilling the water or the wine, if we oblige the server at table to place each dish before our very nose, besides other improprieties of the like kind.

It is right when speaking to a person to raise our eyes in order to show that we are attending to him,

or to assure him that we intend to execute with care what he recommends, or to intimate to him any mistake that he has made, or from any other good motive. But such glances should be rapid, especially if the person be one to whom we owe particular respect, and whom St. Ignatius indicates as *persons of consideration*.

He who wishes to observe closely this rule will never look to one side, nor down on the ground, nor across a person, for this, if often repeated, would be the mask of a haughty disposition ; if done frequently and slyly it would show suspiciousness, and give the idea of a man perfectly capable of aiming a stone, but who would first carefully conceal it in his hand.

Rule 5. "Wrinkles on the forehead, and still more on the nose, are to be avoided that there may appear outwardly a serenity, which may be a token of that which is within."

The habit of wrinkling the forehead, when done by a voluntary action, indicates either wearisomeness or impatience, the wrinkling of the nose expresses either disgust or contempt ; and all these strong feelings are not only opposed to that peace of soul which a religious ought to enjoy, but are also likely to be offensive to others.

Rule 6. "The lips should neither be too much shut, nor too much open.

Why this, my good brother? It is enjoined because the habitual compression of the lips is considered to be the sign of a morose disposition, this peculiarity being observed in those who imagine that no one should dare to approach them ; while lips wide apart

are noticed only in drunkards, or in weak and absent-minded persons, speaking to whom is much like speaking to a statue.

Rule 7. "The whole countenance should show cheerfulness rather than sadness, or any other less moderate affection."

This point cannot fail of being observed if the four preceding rules are well practised. The countenance will be an infallible guide to the true state of the mind, in which perfect tranquillity and happiness are united to great candour and simplicity. These attract the hearts and gain the affection of all, and have power to calm down the many passions in the souls of those who may come to us full of trouble and agitation, an influence which has been frequently exercised by the Saints.

Rule 8. "The apparel is to be clean, and arranged with religious decency."

Regard for others requires one to avoid with care everything that might cause disgust or repugnance, such as slovenliness, or disorder of dress, a point as much to be blamed in a religious as is over-attention to dress. We are poor certainly, but we should at the same time be clean and neat. I would have you to be poor, said a holy and venerable novice master, and so poor as to have nothing that can be taken from you, not even stains or marks of dirt from your clothes. But this question of cleanliness, and the removal of anything that might cause disgust or repugnance in another, is too important and necessary a point in the matter before us of politeness, to be passed over thus quickly. What I shall say, however, on the

subject will be so clear, that should you possibly have already fallen into these faults, even more than once, no excuse can be admitted after this.

Though sometimes done, it is an intolerable act of rudeness to look too much at one's handkerchief after using it, or to be too noisy in the operation itself, still worse is it to shake it and spread it out, to put it up diligently in different folds as though it were a napkin, and end by using it again vigorously, jerking the head from side to side. There are few actions more humiliating or repulsive in nature than the hoarding up and watching over these miserable pearls ! Get over this act then quickly, so as to attract as little attention as possible. Never take the handkerchief of another, nor offer him your own, except in very rare circumstances.

Never put your fingers to your nose, it is only badly brought up children who do that ; nor into your ears to remove the wax, if necessary use your handkerchief for that purpose, and it can be done in an instant.

To scratch yourself violently in the presence of others is an act of great vulgarity. If something must be done, rub yourself with your finger for a moment, simply to remove the violence of the irritation.

If the wind rises suddenly from your stomach, and you neglect to turn away from a person who may be near you, or to place your hand on your mouth, you have committed a terrible and disgusting breach of manners.

To spit out at random, looking neither where nor how, and taking no heed of those present, is enough

to stamp a man as rude, even when his habits in other respects show good breeding and mark him out for an example of courtesy, one to be regarded as a perfect master of politeness on every other point but this. How then can there be so much inconsistency in the world ! Be on your guard lest the same fault should be found in yourself.

Avoid everything that might offend the noses of those about you, I am obliged to speak very clearly to you, as also the use of any kind of perfume. The perfect thing is when the religious has not the breath of anything about him except the odour of his own virtues.

Never let another see what is unbecoming, and never make the remark that such or such a thing has a bad meaning, except to warn another against the repetition of it ; and never under the slightest pretext speak of anything indecent, or that could disgust another at table.

Rule 9. "The hands, if not employed in holding the dress, must be kept decently quiet."

This point is sufficiently difficult, especially for the young, and even for those who are older if they have early learnt the habit of energetic gesticulation. In some countries the force of habit is so strong that, were you to oblige persons to speak only with their lips, you could not at first half understand them, for they supply what is wanting, and give double effect to their words by the rapid use of hand and gesture.

Yet all this is a great fault, especially amongst religious. In speaking, some gestures are of course

allowed, but when we are not speaking it is best to hold the hands joined together in a modest and unaffected manner ; unless indeed we cross our arms, or have our hat or cap in our hand, at which times the hand should be held about as high as the breast or waist, with entire simplicity and modesty in their position.

This is the place for adding a few words as to our manner of saluting one another—an essential point of politeness—in which we should be careful to make no mistake, either of defect or excess.

You are already aware that the rule requires you to salute those in the community who are Priests, and in this, as in every other matter, you should give them marks of profound respect. As regards others, in order to avoid falling into any mistake, simply follow the custom of the house, in which there may be considerable variety, as in many communities, especially if they be large, it is not the general habit to salute all those whom you meet. When, however, several walking together in company pass you, beyond doubt, you should salute them; as also if in the street, or during walk, you pass by a Bishop or a secular Priest, provided it is not against the custom of the place to do so, in which case one would be regarded as singular, and the salutation had better be omitted.

Be exact in returning any salute made to you ; and, as a general rule without, however, carrying it to an extreme, do not show yourself too careful of the hat or cap, on your head. You should not be over-exact as to the point, whether the first salutation ought to be given by you, or by the person who is passing, for

he who salutes first, proves himself the more worthy and indeed the more honoured of the two ; for is not he the one who really obeys and carries out most perfectly the precept of St. Paul : *In honour preventing one another.*

In the question therefore of politeness, try to be always the first to begin.

It is not sufficient to pay attention merely to the proper holding of the hands, you must also watch over the perfect bearing of the whole body. Carefully avoid, then, taking up a position, either when standing or sitting, that would turn your back to another person, as this would be a sign of contempt which could not be tolerated. When seated it is the rudest thing possible to stretch oneself out, or to turn right round on the chair, to cross one's legs, or give any other sign of want of mortification and self-restraint, for it shows entire indifference to the presence of others, and the absence of any regard for them. Again, when standing, do not try to rear your back up against a wall. Finally, avoid with care all appearance of being worn out, or of intending to take up your quarters comfortably where you are.

Rule 10. "The pace should be moderate, without any notable haste, unless necessity should require it ; in which case, however, a care of decorum should be had."

We can always observe a certain decorum, however pressed for time we may be, even if we have to run. And on these unusual occasions, it is extremely useful to have learnt the good habit of walking with modera-

tion and modesty. Accustom yourself therefore, my good brother, never to walk with too much haste, though on the other hand you must avoid marking the tread, and counting each step like a soldier. In walking, it surely is not necessary to roll the body from side to side, nor swing the arms like the pendulum of a clock, or a husbandman sowing grain, for this is considered a fault even in men of the world.

Haste in walking is an act of great impoliteness if you are in the company of others. Why should you thus press forward and try to get before the rest? This, however, may be done with good reason to render some service, as to open the gate for another.

It is a great want of civility, when you meet persons who are walking together, to pass right between them ; as also to stretch out your hand in front of persons, when helping anything to one beyond them, instead of this you should pass behind them.

It will also be laid to the charge of your bad manners, if, after kneeling or sitting in the church, you rise up and remain standing, so as to prevent others from seeing the altar or the preacher. Common sense tells you that in this case you should get out of the way and retire to a side, and not remain there planted in the midst of every one, like Wednesday in the middle of the week. This would make you as rude as an awkward man often is, who when he finds himself in a crowd and does not feel at his ease, generally thrusts himself backward, pushing his hat right in the faces of those who stand around him.

Rule 11. "Every gesture and motion should be such as to give edification to all men."

Be assured of this, that to act according to humility and to draw many to devotion are not two distinct and separate things, but one and the same ; for it is impossible to manifest true humility in our behaviour and exterior actions without drawing souls to the feeling of devotion. Avoid, then, with care all gestures and movements which would not produce this effect ; but, at the same time, do not try to influence others with the intention of appearing to be a saint, or with the display of extravagant gesticulations. Understand well these points. Make neither signs nor grimaces, nor wink with your eyes, nor thrust out your tongue, nor cause inconvenience to others by such movements of the arms and of the head, as would soon make them think anything of you rather than that you were a saint. But yet you must not so misinterpret your rule as to go to the opposite extreme, and with the same motive of being taken for a saint. For to be constantly frowning, raising and keeping the eyes fixed upwards, sighing incessantly like an organ bellows, placing the hands in the shape of a cross over the heart, uttering little cries, or making a sound with the breath in speaking ; these and such like grimaces, for no other name suits such miserable little peculiarities, are enough to destroy the patience and the devotion of the very angels.

Rule 12. "Where there are many together, they must keep the order, assigned them by the Superior, walking in companies of two or three."

Mark you the intention of this rule, it is not that

they may follow their own tastes or caprices, but preserve the order assigned them by the Superior, without struggling, like a flock of sheep coming out of their fold ; and it is that by this act of obedience and mortification they may accustom themselves to walk and converse with all their brothers, without drawing any distinction or difference between them.

This little rule is more important than it seems, and I assure you, if you obey it carefully and without repugnance, always accepting the companion assigned to you with readiness and cheerfulness, both in the house and outside, you will escape many violations of politeness and practise many acts of virtue. But with regard to this point I have something more to say. In the first place, it is an act of politeness not to keep your company waiting, when the signal for walk has been given ; in the next place, to accommodate yourself to their pace and to their taste in the selection of the walk ; and in the last, to adopt the hour they prefer for returning. At all times show yourself obliging and attentive, except when there is any inclination to act contrary to the rule, for then God ought to be considered by us before any man.

When three or more are together, either in the house or outside, it is the rule of politeness to give, on the return, the middle place to him whose name stands at the head of the band ; but if a particular one has been named as superior of the walk, the middle place must be always given to him, or the right hand if only two are together. If there be occasion to sit down, it is to him that the first place and the most commodious seat should be given, though

he has the power to give up his claim, in which case an inferior should neither dispute nor refuse consent, but simply accept the attention paid him.

In every instance of taking such or such a place, discretion and natural good sense will be your guide, and is not likely to deceive you. But it were contrary to these and a decided mistake to imagine that politeness required you to be always and everywhere last after the others. Were you to follow this fine principle, you would be the last to uncover your head to salute another, as though yielding only to force and necessity; you would be in no hurry to lift up from the ground anything you had just seen fall down, you would not take one step forward to open a gate, or to offer holy water to another. But let us pass on to the concluding and most important of these rules.

Rule 13. "When they have to speak, they must be mindful of modesty and edification, as well in their words as in the style and manner of speaking."

This rule teaches us how to govern the tongue. So wide in its range, such an abyss of evil, it is more terrible than a two-edged sword, as the Holy Spirit tells us. To regulate it is in truth a difficult undertaking, my dear brother, to fulfil which we must have the grace of God with us, as the of the Book author of Wisdom declares.

From what has already been said in the chapter about joking, you may gather some idea of the difficulty of this important subject. But you can judge better of it from the multitude of faults against politeness, which I now give in order, according to promise,

showing that all these faults, or at least the larger number of them, come from the tongue.

The matter is inexhaustible and would take a whole book, so you cannot be surprised to find this chapter longer than any preceding one. I would like to place it separately in your hands, as a little abridgement of all that is necessary to secure for you the reputation of being men perfectly instructed, and polished to a marvel.

Begin by distrusting your tongue on every occasion, for it is easier, says Theophrastes, to hold in a fiery horse which has seized the bit between its teeth than to command an unbridled and disobedient tongue, and even a little humility ought to convince you that your own is very much of this nature. Call to mind how often you have yourself been hurried along by it, and have repented of letting slip some word which once uttered can never be recalled, however much you may wish it.

Try and habituate yourself to make every word pass twice at least across the file before letting it reach your tongue, because the tongue is always moist, and words glide so quickly over it; they flow along it with incredible ease!

To attain this first point you must hold your tongue, and love silence much, according to the counsel of Father Alphonsus Rodriguez; for he alone knows how to speak who knows how to be silent, as he alone knows how to pay who knows how to earn; and he only to command, who has learnt how to obey.

But you will say: To keep silence is very difficult! Undoubtedly it is, I do not deny it; just as I know full

well that he, who speaks much, commits many faults. How then can I be astonished that we hear of so many miseries and follies in the world, when there are so many in it who speak upon that of which they know nothing, and whose tongue like an arrow pierces and tears others to pieces. That unhappy little member that God has given to man to do good with, and such great good, changes itself into an instrument of destruction, as the best wine makes the sharpest and sourest vinegar; and, through his abuse of it, a man fills his soul with trouble and with a thousand torments that would easily have been avoided, had he but kept watch over his tongue, as the Holy Spirit counsels in the Book of Proverbs.

Attend then to each thing which you ought to prevent your tongue from uttering, in order that you may say that only which will merit for you the love of God, and of your brothers.

To speak with praise of oneself or of one's own affairs, whether openly or indirectly; to boast of one's own mental powers, one's talents, or one's personal qualities, even when mixing up with such language words of humility in the very worst spirit of pride; to occupy for some length of time the attention of a whole company, or of a society of any kind, in the narration of one's own personal history; a certain tendency to draw public attention to oneself, to hold the ball of conversation in one's own hand, to make oneself important, enthroned in general admiration while discoursing of coats-of-arms, of titles, of grand achievements, of duels even which may have taken place in one's family, all this were much to be blamed

even in a man of the world, but in a religious it would be simply detestable, without entering into the question of mere politeness. To see a man thus offering up incense in self-worship and raising himself up above others, indirectly reproaching them to their face for their miserable state compared to his, this might well cause indignation in every one and bring down universal contempt upon itself, and it is a truth pretty generally known that he, who seeks glory by this road, will find by it only contempt and ridicule. In a word, to boast of oneself is nothing else than childish and empty talk.

Be on your guard never to imitate those who are so full of senseless and imprudent zeal as to hasten, on every occasion, to give advice to those who do not wish for it, and who even have no need of it. Advice, I warn you, is, like a glass of water, to be presented to those who ask for it, but never to be first offered to any one. Give advice readily when you are requested, but even then think well before you speak ; do your best to find out what the glory of God requires, and then your work will be one of true charity and spiritual mercy.

With persons of a sad and melancholy turn, you should not speak on subjects likely to increase their depression ; nor with those who are tried by affliction should you use harsh words, calculated only to deepen their gloom and drive them into despair.

When you have bad news to give you must use very great precaution, employing all the care and management which the weakness or extreme sensibility of the person may require, in order that being prepared for

the blow it may fall less heavily. Be not like certain kind souls who, through over-charity, are always in great hurry to carry bad news.

You must try also not to mix up painful subjects of conversation with those which are cheerful and agreeable to all present; this would be to disturb innocent pleasure, and so cause serious annoyance. The opposite extreme is no less disagreeable for others, when you speak too much and in too loud a tone, or laugh immoderately; when you insist on singing though you really cannot sing, or have not been asked; not even were it some religious hymn you wished to sing, for the unsuitableness of the occasion would alone prevent all true devotion, and the strength of your voice might possibly destroy the very hearing of those present.

Contradictions, disputes, bets, challenges, should be banished as some of the worst pests of religious recreation and conversation; yet we would not be justified in preventing any one, who considers himself bound to defend the truth on some particular subject, from urging his opinion with modesty and good arguments, that are employed only to make the truth better known, and not in order to gain the mastery; for this our rule itself tells us.

Do your best also to speak at the right time, and on the right subject; do not act so rudely to a person as to interrupt him in order to give advice, especially on matters in which you yourself have not sufficient knowledge. Be slow in bringing forward your own opinion, especially when not applied to for it; also avoid breaking in upon another's conversation, or

making it evident that what another is saying is of very little interest to you by beginning a conversation with your next neighbour, and so leaving the poor man all alone to seek out a new hearer for the conclusion of the remarks that he had begun to address to yourself.

In the case, however, in which any person of the company begins to speak ill of a neighbour, it is the act really of holy politeness to put an end to the conversation by introducing discreetly some other topic for discussion, like a man who brings water to a burning house. Do not forget these words of the Book of Wisdom: "The wise man will hold his peace till he sees opportunity, but a babbler and a fool will regard no time."

If many persons are carrying on a conversation together, politeness forbids our beginning a separate conversation with any one of their number. You should not read letters or papers, and still less books, to yourself on these occasions; if necessity obliges you to read, you should withdraw to the side a little, after having asked the permission of those present, and this last act of civility should never be omitted if, being in the company of others, you have occasion to go to speak to any one alone.

Persons who are quick and impetuous have no right to catch the word out of the mouths of those who are more calm and measured in speaking, they should not have the appearance of anticipating, and in some sort dictating to them what they seem about to say. But, on the other hand, those of sluggish disposition should try to conquer this fault, and in order

to show that they have no need of a spur, they should avoid holding in suspense those who listen to them, and thus not try their patience too much for the sake of hearing what perhaps is not worth the trouble.

Unless you wish to weary out every one, do not indulge, my dear brother, in long introductions, prefaces, or opening remarks, it is a very bad habit. Long stories with a perfect litany of "says he" and "do you know" is unendurable, yet some persons drag these in everywhere, stringing together a thousand tales perfectly unconnected with the question, and which only waste the time and patience of the hearer; besides which they give no chance to others to get in a word through their ceaseless flow of talk and long orations, in which they constantly repeat themselves. No wonder then when such a man speaks, they all complain that he wearies them to death. And, since a long talker like this has nothing really to talk about, we might well say with Father Francis Isla: I cannot imagine a greater punishment than to be obliged to listen to a being like that, for three quarters of an hour on the stretch.

The misery, however, becomes two-fold greater; nay, the infliction is an actual martyrdom, when the talker adds to all a great facility in repeating, under every possible form, those set phrases that come in without rhyme or reason, such as: That's it! Do you see? Do you understand? You know! or, Do you know? Now all this is most truly wearisome and intolerable. Study yourself closely lest you too may have some of these absurd peculiarities, and even after such examination be not too sure, for one may often

fail to perceive them in oneself; ask, therefore, one of your brothers to have the charity to tell you, and then try to correct any such habit that you may have.

As to lies and exaggerations, even in joke, you must avoid them also, for it is at all times very rude to mislead any one. Make no offer of doing or giving anything which you do not intend to fulfil, for these are only empty compliments, and nothing is ever really done by one given to pay compliments. In fact this is nothing short of telling a lie, because as you have no thought of doing what you promise, you are telling a lie; and he, who finds out after the first or second time that you do not perform your promise, will no longer believe what you say, and you will have gained nothing by your empty compliment.

Never commence and never continue a subject of conversation in which perfect decency is not preserved, even when the matter itself is not sinful; because in speaking of such topics, and in narrating anecdotes of this sort, so many points must be attended to in order to avoid wounding the delicate feeling of others, that is it very difficult, nay, almost impossible to succeed.

When in general company a question on any particular point is asked, it appears more fitting that an answer should be given by him who is best instructed on the matter, or is first in dignity amongst those present; following the example of the Apostles who waited for St. Peter to answer, when our Lord asked them if they knew who He was. Remember that conversation is not like a piece of music, in which any number can join and yet be heard without difficulty,

perhaps to the actual improvement of the harmony; but in conversation, the only hope of obtaining a little harmony and agreement is by speaking one after the other without being in too great a hurry, as actors do on the stage.

With particular care guard yourself against vulgar expressions, but with greater care still against the opposite extreme, for that agrees as little with your position of lay-brother.

Every time that, even when the conversation has not been of God or of spiritual subjects, a lay-brother takes it into his head to quote some passage from the holy Fathers or Doctors, could you but see how ridiculous it is, and it is just as bad when he must needs put in a few words from the Latin text by way of showing a little erudition. One may imagine what a piece of affectation this would be regarded, even in a scholastic who was attending classes. You run also great risk of giving rise to the compassion or laughter of others by your fine sermons, if you do not reflect well upon the measure and discretion which the rule recommends you, when speaking of the zeal you should have for the salvation of your neighbour and his advance in virtue. Be constantly in fear lest one might apply to you the words of the Book of Wisdom: "As a lame man hath fair legs in vain, so a parable is unseemly in the mouth of fools. As a thorn goeth into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools." Know you who this fool is? It is he who has learnt a few of these fine sentences and beautiful phrases, and is busily engaged in retailing them.

To cut one's nails while speaking to a person, still worse to bite them, is disgusting, and enough to make a man quit the place and leave you to yourself. It is equally rude to clean your teeth, but I shall speak of this afterwards when we come to the subject of meals.

Whistling through the teeth, or yawning when another is speaking to you, is a breach of good manners ; but as a yawn sometimes takes a person unawares, you should at least cover your mouth with your hand or a handkerchief, in order to conceal the contortions of your face and not annoy others with your breath.

Many do not attend sufficiently to this, they stand close up against a person when speaking to him, right before his face, an unpardonable act did they but know that their strong breath was anything but sweet. But it would be still worse if they were aware that from the loss of teeth, or some other reason, they had the bad habit of not being able to say four words without favouring the face of the persons they were talking to with a shower of spray. Can you imagine anything more disagreeable.

As to the question of teeth, how many points, my good brother, could I mention to you, which might well make you blush if, like some others, you are so mistaken as to make sanctity consist in negligence and slovenliness, without reflecting that you are continually distressing and annoying persons so unfortunate as to be obliged to have frequent intercourse with you. In the name of heaven, I beseech you, every day clean out your mouth with water and brush your teeth, and

if you hear another remark that this is a piece of worldly vanity, tell him from me that he is little aware how much serious fault may be connected with its neglect.

To talk with your fingers to one, as if he were deaf and dumb, is an act of rudeness to others and shows a want of delicacy. Thank God our holy founder has saved us from the danger of this and many other faults of rudeness, by the spirit of that rule which forbids our touching others in joke, in order, as the text tells us, that we may preserve the gravity and modesty of behaviour which becomes religious persons. Most certainly to seize another person by the arm, to give him a rough blow, to push him, to lay our hands on his shoulders, to hang on him when speaking, all these are unbecoming familiarities, and a son of the Society who preserves his self-possession and his self-respect, who loves and observes his rules, would never surely commit these faults for all the gold in the world.

He must avoid with care every act that might offend his brothers, such as to interrupt those who are speaking when he comes into recreation, or to stop them when so engaged by some ridiculous or prying question. Neither ought he to speak to any one in a language which the rest do not understand, nor whisper remarks into the ear of his neighbour, and then begin to laugh. In fine, a true son of the Society will at all times bear in mind the precept of St. Paul: "That our conversation be always modest, seasoned with the salt of wisdom, teaching us in what way we ought to treat persons to whom we speak."

There is much yet to be said about our behaviour

as to language, visits, letters, and all our relations with our neighbour. A religious may fall into many faults on each of these heads, and if he would avoid them, so as to act always as becomes his vocation, he cannot dispense with certain attentions, and with many usages and practices to which persons in the world are accustomed; for it is necessary to treat all and each as they have a right to expect. But as I do not wish to extend this chapter much further, I shall say only a few words on each of these three points.

As regards visits, when they must be made, which should be as seldom as possible, do not show yourself stiff and awkward. When others visit you, make up your mind to be very patient and to suffer with resignation, for they will descend like sacks of lead upon you, since most men only come to spend and waste a little time at your expense. Do your best to shorten all such visits, remembering that time lost is time robbed from God Himself; you are not, however, allowed to exceed the limits of politeness, or say anything that might even indirectly wound your neighbour in your desire to show him to the door.

If you wish to do the right thing in these visits, speak but little, for you will be observed, and there is no need that your conduct should remind others of these words of the Book of Wisdom: "There are those who, because they have observed silence, have been regarded as wise, and there are those who, for much speaking, have been accounted hateful; there are some who keep silent because they have nothing

to say, and there are others who have kept silent because they have waited for the occasion to speak to the purpose." Determine to be of the number of those who are wise in their visits at all times and in all places; and if you happen some day to say a good thing, which appears so good in the eyes of those who hear you, that they decide you must know more than lay-brothers generally do, be not ashamed to say and do at once what one of your brothers did when travelling with a person living in the world. When they were conversing together, and the good brother had made a remark much to the purpose, his companion observed: "Without doubt, my father, you have taught theology in some one of your colleges." "I," replied the brother, taking off his hat and baring his head, "No, no! sir, I am but a poor lay-brother, and am now on my way to Florence to be cook." While another lay-brother, whom for three years a secular had observed amongst the students, remarked, when asked if he had not finished his studies by this time, that he had finished them a long time ago, and that he was but a moderately good hand at making cassocks.

With regard to the question of letters a great deal might be said, had I not confined myself to the simple question of politeness. Ask from God the favour of having but few letters to write, and of knowing how to make them short, becomingly written, prudent and edifying, and with these qualities you need not fear that there will be any faults in them against politeness. But in order that no point may be omitted, ascertain how your letters should be

folded, how directed, and any other little matter which will prevent their having the appearance of being written by a mere soldier, workman, or rustic ; for after all you are none of these, though your rule does forbid your continuing your studies, should you perhaps have already learnt a little.

In conclusion, be anxious to treat each person as becomes his rank, that you may hurt the feelings of no one. If he who treats you with kindness and a certain familiarity be not one of the community, though in a respectable position, thank him for granting you this favour, without however claiming terms of equality, for politeness requires this at your hands. As regards members of the same community, there are also civilities to be observed, into the details of which I do not require to enter. I will only warn you against any of those affectations of manner which should never, even in our day, be indulged in when speaking to our equals, though I am aware that on this point some different customs have been introduced. Let us now pass on to another subject of the highest importance.

CHAPTER VI.

OF OUR MEALS, AND OF OUR RECREATIONS.

THERE is a saying, as old as the world I believe, that men are best known by their conduct at and after meals, because these are the best times and the best places for finding out what men are as regards education and disposition ; you have but to watch how they eat and how they take recreation. Let me assure you, my good brother, this saying is so universally acknowledged, that until your manner had been observed for a short time at least, both at table and at recreation, no one would decide on your being a man of really good breeding, even though you might have enjoyed all the benefits of a good education, and were in every other respect a perfect model for others.

You cannot claim to be this at all if you do not know how to eat and how to amuse yourself with propriety, the reason of which is clear ; you can do neither of these well, unless you have learned to mortify your passions, which generally display themselves at meals and in amusements. Without this mortification, as you cannot be ignorant, it is well-nigh impossible to continue always within the limits of religious civility and politeness.

But is it, you would say, indeed true that the passions are excited and stirred up during meals and

recreation? Can you ask me such a question! Observe that we are not speaking of those days in which you may have eaten without appetite, or have taken recreation without the power to enjoy it; but on other occasions is it not most true that you have more or less eagerly longed to appease your hunger, or to win at games? Here, then, a free opportunity is open for two sorts of passions which imperiously demand to be satisfied—gluttony, and that self-love which when considered by itself is simply called selfishness, but which is often accompanied by motives of interest, or of avarice more or less sordid, according as the game is more or less rarely played.

It might appear to some almost useless, not to say unsuitable, to speak of games to religious; but you yourself, my brother, will not be surprised at this, for you know how much difference there is between games. For instance, you know well the kinds permitted by the Society to her children, and that, like every good mother, she is quite willing to grant them a little innocent amusement, in order to lighten their hearts and render work less heavy both for head and hand.

With respect to bodily refreshment, none can wonder that I should mention it to you, because if there be in the whole world a man who can do without this relief of recreation, and can cheerfully put forth all his energies without the help of a little rest by amusing himself in the company of others, neither you nor I have ever yet in the whole course of our lives seen this happy individual, a man who can do without the cook, and without any of those things provided by

our bountiful mother earth for the nourishment of her inhabitants. Every one must eat, and I have not decided whether this is a misfortune or an advantage, but you take your meals in the presence of others, and these see you eating, and from the manner in which you perform this act they decide at once to what extent you resemble those who eat without thinking of any one else, as if they were mere animals, like the very brutes. But, my dear brother, there must be nothing of this manner in you, and to avoid the possibility of it, I shall now give you some points of advice as rules of politeness.

The first thing to remind yourself of when you go into the refectory, is that there have been Saints who have never entered it without tears, and as though in despite of themselves, looking upon this material action as giving only more strength and power of temptation to their body, which is their chief enemy. Many others, without going so far, may yet be an example to us, for we have never yet heard of one who hurried to get in before the others, and so obtain the best place at table contrary to the counsel of the Gospel. May such an idea as this strike you only with aversion and pity for any who could be guilty of it.

Do not cover your head before sitting down, and wait till the Superior has done so, for it is against good manners to do it sooner.

Be not the first to unfold your napkin. The reader should begin when the Superior has taken up his napkin, and the rest take theirs as soon as the reader has commenced. Try not to be the last to finish,

were it only through respect for the counsel of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Wisdom : *Art thou set at a great table, be not the first to open thy mouth upon it. . . . Leave off first for manners' sake ; and exceed not lest thou offend.*

Generally speaking you should lower your eyes, but elevate your heart to God, and pay attention to the reading, and in the action of eating, purely material and animal as it is, you will find devotion, as did our holy father St. Ignatius ; and you will observe temperance and perfect politeness, along with exterior and interior modesty, as Rule 30 of the Summary directs.

If you are faithful to the rule, you will certainly not eat quickly, and you will not make much noise in eating. If at table you rattle the dishes, glasses, and plates, you show awkwardness and carelessness : and if any sound comes from your teeth, mouth, or lips, you can scarcely have remarked how much this is a characteristic habit of certain little animals which are not good models for imitation.

Holy Scripture warns us against exclaiming with pleasure and rapture when sitting down to table : *Say not, there are many things which are upon it ;* oh, what a fine dinner, what dishes ! for this would be to publish to the whole world that you have come there to enjoy your different appetites. Do not follow with your eyes the dishes as they pass, nor fix your glance on the best morsel, calculating what your chances are of being able to secure it for yourself. And when any particular dish contains something more appetizing, some rarer delicacy, avoid helping

yourself to so great a quantity of it that, if others wish to partake of the same, most of them will have to go without. Do not eat with both sides of your mouth at once, nor take so large a mouthful as to exhibit to those near you a lump or apparent swelling in both cheeks, making you grin like a monkey. In town, when dining with persons of the world, do not begin to praise food, and show neither too hearty an appetite nor over-delicacy in what you eat ; do not ask to be helped twice to the same dish, and but rarely accept a second helping when offered you. Do not call out for something to drink before it is handed round to all, for against this very thing the Holy Spirit warns you in the same chapter : *Do not be the first to ask for drink.*

In the matter of drinking, as you have not a copy of the Scriptures in your hand, I shall here quote a few short texts for you on this particular subject, that they may be fixed in your memory, and that it may never enter into your thoughts to complain of the holy custom which prevails in the Society, of putting a little water into the wine.

“How sufficient is a little wine for a man well taught, and in sleeping thou shalt not be uneasy with it, and thou shalt feel no pain. Watching, and choler, and gripes are with an intemperate man. Sound and wholesome sleep with a moderate man. He shall sleep till morning, and his soul shall be delighted with him. Challenge not them that love wine, for wine hath destroyed very many. Fire trieth hard iron, so wine drunk to excess shall rebuke the hearts of the proud. Wine taken with sobriety is equal life

to men : if thou drink it moderately thou shalt be sober. What taketh away life? Death. What is his life who is diminished with wine? Wine was created from the beginning to make men joyful and not to make them drunk. Wine drunken with moderation is the joy of the soul and the heart. Sober drinking is health to soul and body. Wine drunken with excess raiseth quarrels, and wrath, and many ruins. Wine drunken with excess is bitterness of the soul.”*

What think you, my good brother? I would call this an excellent subject for meditation. What ! Could there be a shadow of use in our brothers meditating upon it? God knows if there be. For my part, I assure you I feel not the slightest regret at having quoted so long a passage, even though my reader may think it the most useless passage in the whole of my book.

And now to continue my subject. It is, you must know, a breach of politeness to take up your glass with your left hand, or to grasp it tightly in both, to look round on all sides while drinking, or to fix your eyes on a particular person over the top of your glass, to push its edge far into your mouth, to sip up a succession of mouthfuls, or take one long draught at a time, or to choose the very moment when the person next you is drinking. It is as bad to make a noise with your throat while you drink, or to finish with a long-drawn sigh for want of breath, to overfill your glass and endanger its spilling on the cloth ; or again, to speak to another who is in the act of

* Ecclus. xxxi.

drinking. Such observations as these appear very trifling, do they not? And yet, leave out a single point, and you will see what is thought of you by those who know in what true politeness consists.

Be careful not to press another too much so as almost to force him to eat or drink more, for this is not only bad manners in the eyes of the world, but may be positively bad for the person himself. Look well to the object for which forks, spoons, and knives have been made; learn how to use each for that object; touch nothing with your fingers, not even bones to pick or suck the marrow from them. To stain your fingers with the gravy, sauce, or mustard, would be not only a rudeness, but a sign of coarse habits, requiring you constantly to wipe your hands with your napkin till it becomes as soiled as a kitchen towel, to the disgust of all near when they see you raise it to your mouth, which you should always do before drinking. Some, perhaps, go so far as to wipe their fingers with a piece of bread, and then leave it on the cloth exposed to view, or they suck their fingers in violation of all rule, to be exceeded only by the full extreme of wiping their hands on the tablecloth.

If any one be so unfortunate as to burn his mouth by too hot a spoonful, he must do his best to suffer in patience and silence; if very badly scalded, as may sometimes happen, let him quickly, before any one can observe it, while concealing his act with his hand, drop from his mouth into his plate what is burning him, and then hand the plate to the server behind. For though politeness has every right to

demand that we avoid any unbecoming act, it cannot condemn us to the torture of being burnt alive.

As a general rule, if by chance we have taken anything that we cannot keep in our mouth, it were the worst manners to spit it out into the plate, and just as bad to throw it down behind us on the floor.

Other points to be attended to at table are, that we never use our handkerchief without in some manner concealing it, that we never wipe perspiration from our forehead, nor scratch ourselves anywhere, but especially on the head, nor clear our throat with great noise and effort, for acts like these are enough to turn a stomach of lead, and should never be done if they can possibly be avoided, and if they cannot, we must hide them from sight as we would a sin.

You must be already aware that nothing is more uncivilized than to collect all the sauce and clean out your plate with a piece of bread, or to drain out the last drop of gravy or soup, either by drinking it out of the soup-plate itself, or by pouring what remains into your spoon.

It is also against politeness to blow upon what you are about to take in order to cool it, or to try and blow out of your glass any little thing that may have dropped into it. Wait till what is before you has become cool enough, or else with a fork or spoon move it gently from side to side in your plate; you may also with a spoon, or in some other way, remove what may have fallen into your glass, doing this unobserved, especially if it be a fly or any other less pleasant object.

When you are helping yourself or taking anything

from a dish that is offered you, avoid turning over every piece in the dish in search of some morsel more delicate or more according to your taste, because this shows no consideration for those who have to partake of the same dish.

Never pass your arms over the dish before you in order to take something from another dish. Do not begin gnawing at the piece of bread placed beside you, but cut off the piece you wish to eat ; and again, do not continue holding up your knife in your hand, but even in eating an apple lay the knife down on the table when not using it.

It is a bad habit to break in pieces all your bread and put it into the soup, for it does not look well to the eye ; nor yet again, when cutting bread should you place it on the table, for you are sure to cut and injure the cloth.

You should not offer to another fruit or anything else which you have yourself begun to eat, nor when asked out to dine with others may you put any of the fruit or dessert into your pocket ; and what adds to the impropriety of this in a religious is that he has no permission to take it.

Avoid leaning too far forward on the table or over your plate, and while waiting to be served do not play with the salt-cellar, with your plate, with the bread, or with anything else that is at hand, but with modesty and composure keep your hands crossed or resting before you on the edge of the table.

Be especially careful not to stretch out your elbows and thus take up a large share of the space belonging to your neighbour ; nor should you cross your legs

under the table, a fault into which you may easily fall if you forget the holiness of the place in which you eat, and this I call holy because, next after the church, the refectory ought to be for religious a place of sanctity, deserving both deference and respect.

During meals, or after them, do you ever make use of a fork or the point of a knife to cleanse your teeth from any of the food that may adhere to them, for this is a very dirty habit, or even to pick them in a violent, noisy way ; but the perfection of impropriety is to rub your teeth with your napkin twisted up after the manner of a toothpick, and to improve upon it by a second and a third application. The plan of rinsing out the mouth with considerable noise after a meal, even though you may place your napkin before it, is very offensive and disagreeable, and you would feel this yourself were you seated by the side of one who favoured you with a similar dessert.

As my last and concluding lesson in religious politeness, yet one which I would impress ineffaceably on your memory, as it seems to me more important than any of the rest, I advise you on no pretext to speak of what you are eating, or have lately been eating ; and if another begins the subject, refuse to carry it on, let it die out. To speak of food and draw pleasure from your description of it is gluttony ; to criticise your food in order to complain and murmur against the Superior who provides it, or the cook who has prepared it, is an act of immortification at the very least ; and in either case both show equally bad taste and bad manners. This could only happen with two equally poor specimens of religious, of which the

one sort would fain seek and find again what it had left behind in the world, and the other tries to obtain in the religious life that which it would never have been able to get at home. I scarcely know which of these two characters should be considered the more contemptible, but experience has taught me, as without doubt it has taught you also, that if any brother appears more particular, more discontented, and more exacting than others in all matters connected with food, he is far more likely to be one who has left absolutely nothing behind him in the world, or who, had he remained in the world, would have found there but little to live upon. But we must now hasten on, in order to say a few words about the manner of conducting ourselves during games.

If you eat with politeness and according to the rules of good breeding, you will eat with moderation, and if you eat with moderation you will observe this precept of the spiritual life, that you must always rise from table with your head so clear as to be able at once to join with others in prayer, or in any other good work.

But, unhappily, such is not our general disposition after meals; and prayer, unless very short, as for example the visit to the chapel customary in the Society, would probably not be very fervent. On the contrary, experience tells us that men after eating find themselves disposed rather to indulge in recreations and amusements, and in some game; they must therefore learn how to amuse themselves without losing sight of the rules of civility and politeness. You will remember, my good brother, how the

Israelites in the wilderness, after having eaten and drunk, joined in very sinful sport, and how such sport cost them very dear, as we read in Scripture, in the Book of Exodus. It is perhaps on this account that the Society, as a good mother, at the same time that she gives her children some short recreation after meals, and wishes them to hold pleasant and familiar intercourse with each other, does not ordinarily permit that the time of recreation be spent in games strictly so called. They may speak as freely as they like, though within the limits of religious observance; and this is, as Father Gagliardi tells us in his book on the knowledge of our Institute, because it is really difficult to hold complete control over oneself during the hour that follows meals, hence they are confined to conversation at that time, that they may learn the habit of speaking with strict propriety, through the practice of the virtues which always accompany this watchfulness over one's conversation, and hence the Society cannot fail of gaining, and of gaining much from this custom. They may converse then, but they may not join in games, for if they did, it is probable that more good would be lost than gained.

In truth, then, my dear brother, with respect to the practice of perfection and of acts of virtue, let us examine the point. Could you feel assured that you have gained something in the course of the game? If you could, then I congratulate you and give you full liberty to continue to play every time that you have the opportunity, without paying attention to what I am about to say, for you can never

be wanting in politeness at your games when you preserve moderation and modesty in playing. But if at times you have left off playing considerably less pleased with yourself than when you began, you must apply yourself with all diligence to learn how to play according to the directions I now give you.

Bring with you at all times to this exercise a pure intention of pleasing God, either by the renovation of your strength, or by acting in the spirit of obedience to your Superiors, or any other intention, in a word, that is not the simple and only one of diversion; and I promise you this practice will stifle in their birth all those little passions which are called forth by joining a game, however lawful and innocent the game may be.

For who could allow himself to be betrayed into impatience or anger if he reflected that he was engaged in the game simply to fulfil the will of God, and that whether he lost or won it mattered really nothing? Who could forget the rules of modesty if he remembered that the eye of God watched him as closely during his game as during the hour of his meditation, and that God required no less consideration for His presence in the one occupation than in the other? And who could fail of being as willing to leave off playing as he was to begin, if at the signal for the end of recreation he called to mind that he was a religious, and not a secular person who has no other rule in his games than his own enjoyment, taste, or caprice?

Now, by the exercise of these and many other virtues during a game, and by the victory you will

gain over those passions which often display themselves in it, I promise you that you will play with real success, though you may not be very clever at the game, or may even lose every time, for you cannot fail of gaining the reputation of being well principled and well educated, because you will avoid a thousand little faults against politeness, that are much more easily seen by those looking on at the game than by those who take part in it; and I will now point out some of these faults that you may know them beforehand, and not forget to avoid them at the time.

When a person of distinction invites you to play with him it would be against the rules of politeness, and would show great want of perception were you to manifest too much keenness in the game, or too strong a desire to be the winner; the opposite extreme, however, is to be avoided with just as much care, of playing negligently and without interest, so as to leave on his mind the impression that you did not wish to contribute to his amusement, and had no pleasure in playing with him.

If persons to whom you owe marks of respect come forward to take part in the game, it would not be at all polite to continue as before in the game, but you should offer your own place to them.

Generally speaking it is mere selfishness that could lead any one, against all the rules of civility, and especially of religious civility, to show excess of ardour in a game and little readiness to give up his place to another who may wish it, and who has as much right to a little recreation as he has. Hold

then, in aversion, my good brother, a disposition as opposed to politeness as it is to charity.

Correct yourself also if you have contracted the bad habit of humming tunes, whispering to others, or whistling, habits which are frequent with persons much addicted to games, but which you must avoid, however softly and between your teeth you make any sound, since it must cause annoyance to others.

Nor is it right to amuse yourself by strumming with your fingers on the table as though you were playing on a tambourine, nor by beating on the floor with your feet, and it is an act of vulgarity to play the buffoon or the boaster, or to say foolish things with the air of one who claims to be a wit, a mistake into which men very often and very easily fall. If you chance to be in good luck, or to have made a good hit and gained a victory, it is an act of very bad taste to burst out into loud cries of joy and exultation, to dance about in delight, to laugh immoderately, and joke roughly with those near you, for all such manifestations betray a small wit, and are very unpleasant to those in your company, even when perhaps they do not show it outwardly.

You must never permit yourself to cheat, though it were by way of joke, for the part either of cheater or gambler is unworthy of being made a means even of amusement.

Should your game require violent exertions, as most gymnastic exercises do, beware of absurd contentions with others, and still more carefully avoid any movement or posture which is less modest. Should a difficulty or difference of opinion arise, it would be

very unbecoming in you to contend obstinately in your own cause, or for your own gain. Yet if it be necessary to prove the truth of a point, you may do this calmly without raising your voice, and without a single expression that could hurt another, and always without too many words about it.

Should your opponent be very sensitive, and make a work about nothing, preserve your self-possession and do not suffer yourself to be put out by his little blustering, feeling quite sure that no blood will be spilt by it ; continue therefore your game in silence, and take in good part all that he may say, even to the extent of finishing your game with your usual calmness, resolved not to indulge in any excitement of language.

This is a matter of no small moment, insignificant as it may appear, and the reason for being so particular on the point is to prevent the place assigned to the community for recreation from bearing the most remote resemblance to those box-looking places called casinos, or to those tea gardens, taverns, and public-houses where all the passions and all the miseries of man seem to be congregated and to be let loose.

Whether you gain or lose the game preserve throughout the same expression of countenance, since in either case you will have obtained what you desired, namely, an opportunity of pleasing God, and of preparing yourself for death by an exercise both good and holy, after the example of St. Aloysius. Play as he played, and then you may play as much as you like.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now given you, my dear brother, sufficient counsel and advice to help you to acquire and preserve the good habit of politeness, so necessary in the world if we would avoid displeasing and alienating our neighbour, with whom we must, after all, live in friendship if we are to be of any service to him. Should these many points of advice seem long to you, and some neither much called for nor well grounded, forgive the length to which I have gone, in consideration of my goodwill and desire to benefit you. And now let us sum up all in one word: Lay a strong foundation of true and solid piety, and this will suffice for all the rest, since the Holy Spirit teaches us that godliness is useful for everything. True piety can tell you what in such cases a religious should do, whose vocation does not oblige him to live in the midst of the desert. If your virtue has attained the point of making you a saint, you cannot fail of possessing the practical good sense which is so necessary and so precious as to supply everything, and leaves nothing for me to do except to congratulate you with all my heart. In this case you have only to close my book, and may do the same for every other book or treatise written on politeness or courtesy. I have done, yet with this one word more: Should at any time a doubt come into your

mind as to the exact meaning of the expression, *polite and refined piety*, in other words, the science of Divine and heavenly prudence on all points, read over and learn by heart the following lines, which contain good and sound maxims copied from an ancient author—

Learn to practise love to God and to your neighbour.

Learn to love God as your last end, and man as the image of God.

Walk in simplicity and candour; please all, but flatter none.

Acquire the mastery over your own character, but bend to the wishes of others.

Take pleasure in promoting another's good, feel his miseries as your own.

Know both how to refuse and give; to conceal a point, but never to lie.

Learn to do all this with prudence, and you will have learnt the secret of a holy life.

FIFTH PART.

Short abridgement of the Life of Blessed Brother Alphonsus Rodriguez.

THE title "Short abridgement" sufficiently proves, my dear brother, that I have no intention of giving you a complete sketch of the many perfect virtues of our holy protector, by taking in order the different incidents of his long life; that I must leave for the pious curiosity of each one to read for himself from the various lives, which treat of the heroic actions of this faithful servant of God. I propose to myself simply to make a selection of certain traits of character, which will show to all how they may serve God and sanctify themselves by imitating his domestic and religious virtues.

In the eyes of the world, indeed, these virtues are of very little value, yet have they in themselves power to raise, even to the height of perfection and glory, the man who perseveres in practising them. It is on these virtues, then, that I shall dwell at a little greater length, passing rapidly over the years which our Saint spent in the world.

§ 1.

HIS BIRTH, AND HIS MANNER OF LIFE BEFORE HE ENTERED RELIGION.

THE ancient and illustrious town of Segovia in Castille witnessed the birth of Blessed Alphonsus on the 25th of July, 1531. His parents bore an excellent character, and were distinguished rather by their piety than by the nobility of their descent. Respectable in every way, they were equally so as to their occupation, for in their business as woollen-drapers, James Rodriguez and Marian Gomez were highly esteemed, and enjoyed more than sufficient means, so as to occupy the best rank in society, after that of the noble families in their town, which was singularly favoured by nature for the manufacture of woollen goods.

Their family consisted of eleven children, seven sons and four daughters. Alphonsus was the second son, but foremost of all in imitating the virtues of his parents who were excellent and pious people, devoting themselves entirely to the education of their children, and drawing them by their own examples to love and practise virtue. We cannot then deny to them the merit of sowing in this virgin earth the first seeds of devotion to the Queen of Heaven, a devotion which was in course of time to contribute so powerfully to the sanctification of Alphonsus, and to obtain for him such rare and wonderful favours.

It is also very probable that this soul, already so well prepared for the practice of all virtues, was greatly helped by seeing the example of his two sisters, Antonia and Julia, who within two months and a half of each other died at Segovia, in the odour of sanctity, after having consecrated themselves to Jesus Christ by the vow of virginity, though without quitting the world. This vow they kept most faithfully for more than fifty years, leading a life of solitude in the practice of the greatest austerity. Several fathers of the Society, who visited the family of Alphonsus, noticed the work of grace going on in the tender soul of Alphonsus, and gave him precepts of sanctity so well proportioned to his young age that he preserved the liveliest remembrance of them to the hour of his death.

In good time his father sent him to the College of Alcala to continue his studies along with his eldest brother, placing both under the care of Father Villabuena, though he was not at that time ordained. They did not, however, remain long under this safe protection, for their father dying within the year, it became necessary for them to return to Segovia, whence the oldest, by the direction of their mother, set out for Seville to continue his studies there, while Alphonsus was charged with the care of the business and with the duty of watching over his younger brothers.

His mother, who was tenderly anxious for his welfare, induced him to contract a suitable marriage with a young person named Maria Juarez when he was twenty-seven years of age ; but he was not fortunate

in this marriage, nor in the business which he had undertaken for the benefit of the family. Calamities of all sorts befell him in rapid succession, first came very heavy losses, and then the death of his wife, whose dowry was swallowed up in the general ruin, while in the last place no fruit of this union remained except an infant of tender years, whose life was not destined to last long. It was evidently the will of God that he should henceforth give himself up wholly and exclusively to a business more noble and more lucrative, since He had thus severed all the ties that could bind Alphonsus to the world.

Alphonsus himself soon perceived this, and opening his eyes fully to the fact, he began at once to detach his mind from the love of riches which from that time forward possessed not the slightest attraction for him, and to give himself up seriously to God. He made, with many tears, a general confession of his whole life to Father John Baptist Martinez, and drew up for himself a very severe rule of penance and austerity, which in a short time merited for him the gift of the closest union with God in prayer, accompanied by frequent visits from heaven, and by raptures and ecstasies of an extraordinary nature.

I shall mention one particular favour which he received from heaven at this time, and which is narrated by his confessor, Father Martinez, as it will show how God was already preparing him to do battle as a brave soldier of Jesus Christ and of the Society. This marvellous event was, in few words, the sight of a terrible contest in which an army of hideous birds of prey bore down upon a gentle dove,

white as snow, bearing the holy name of Jesus marked on its neck. The attack was repeated three times, and thrice was this army of birds repulsed ; after the last attack they were driven off in flight, routed and forced to yield the victory to the beautiful dove and to the sacred name of Jesus which was on its buckler. Father Martinez interpreted the vision of Alphonsus without hesitation, and told him he would have to pass through a terrible struggle if he entered the Society of Jesus.

From that moment all the desires of Alphonsus drew him towards this holy vocation. One tie alone remained to retain him still in the world, this was the infant whom he loved so tenderly, his only son. And yet he bore it a love so heavenly as to be able to pray fervently to God that He would call up to Himself this infant without delay, were there any danger that, as it grew up, it would have the misfortune of falling into sin. We are told that, during the very night following the day on which he had uttered this prayer, he saw in vision his child laid out and buried, and in truth before a month had passed his son died, God thus testifying that He had accepted the great sacrifice made to Him.

§ 2.

HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE SOCIETY.

FREED from all ties and seeing the way open before him, the only thought of Alphonsus was to follow the evangelical counsel to the letter; and so, despoiling himself of everything that he possessed, and reducing himself to absolute poverty, he took the road to Valencia, to which place he had heard that his former confessor, Father Louis de Santànder, had been sent.

This celebrated and holy religious was rejoiced in heart to see his spiritual son, and to learn from his own mouth the resolution which he had formed of entering the Society. He counselled him to recommence at once and prosecute his studies, though Alphonsus was nearly forty years old; and in order to make it easier for him to do this, he obtained for him the appointment of tutor to the children of a noble family. At the same time with the view of assisting him in his own studies he placed under his care a young scholar, who was good and pious though of so eccentric a disposition, that, abandoning his study of Latin and of every other subject, he resolved to become a hermit in a desert place two days' journey from Valencia. He, unfortunately, did all in his power to persuade Alphonsus to imitate his example, and he would certainly have succeeded

in his plan had not Father Santander spoken to Alphonsus in time, and proved to him in a few words, that this was not only an illusion but a very serious temptation.

Alphonsus, being both humble and docile, was soon convinced of the truth of this, and being also well instructed in the nature of the perfection to which the religious of the Society are called, as well as in the advantages of community life and of the complete abnegation of self-will professed in our Order, he returned to his former resolution of becoming a Jesuit, and decided, at the same time, to make choice of the still more humble state of lay-brother, by which act he certainly gave a grand example and one most useful for the consolation of all the brothers of the Society, who will find in him, as soon as he shall have been placed on our altars, at once a powerful protector and a perfect model.

Alphonsus delayed not a moment, but went and knocked at the gate of the Society, and he who was chosen by heaven to open this gate for him was Father Anthony Cordéses, whose reputation and authority in the Society were already very great. He was esteemed as a saint and a man of rare discretion, of which he gave a marked proof on the present occasion, for the consultors observing Alphonsus to be a man already well on in life and apparently not very strong had great difficulty in admitting him, and gave it as their opinion that it would be unwise to receive him into the Society, especially in the grade of lay-brother. The Father Provincial, however, spoke so strongly of the proofs of virtue which he found in

the postulant, and of the hopes which he could not help entertaining of great fruits from this vocation, that he succeeded in obtaining a favourable decision, and Alphonsus was admitted on the last day of January of the year 1571.

§ 3.

HIS HOLY LIFE DURING THE NOVICESHIP.

THE religious life could not present much that was new to Alphonsus, since he had for so many years already practised all the virtues of the cloister. In addition, however, to this he made such rapid progress in the virtues of the religious state during the six months that he spent in the novitiate at Gandia, that the Superiors did not hesitate to send him to Majorca where the foundations of a new college had just been laid ; and it was there that this good brother was destined to contribute, in so marked a way, to the formation and edification of the whole community by his example in the practice of every virtue, up to the hour of his death. While still a novice he gained the admiration of all by his humility, his mortification, his love of silence and recollection, his piety, and his invincible patience in the midst of temptations.

Satan could not endure that Alphonsus should have escaped his power by entering into the Society, and God permitted the marks of His anger to be visited

upon him in order that the Saint might be a guide to us, and might enhance the richness of his own crown in heaven. The devil entered into deadly contest with him, using all his ordinary weapons, and directing his efforts especially to try and rob him of his virtues of chastity and confidence in God.

The fervent novice triumphed over his first temptation by prayer offered up in very great humility, sheltering himself at the same time under the protection of Mary his tender Mother; and his prayer was so earnest that it gained for him the vision of the Holy Virgin, who appeared along with her Divine Son to console and strengthen him.

The second temptation directed against his confidence was in the last degree terrible, for, through the very means of the mortification and deep sense of his own unworthiness which the devil saw in him, he used every effort to make him lose his vocation, or at least the confidence necessary for persevering in an Order which had need of young and robust men, capable of filling its offices efficiently. But prayer again secured for him the victory in this terrible struggle; and Alphonsus has traced out for us the path we should follow when the treacherous enemy persuades us to fix our eyes upon our own misery, and thus turn aside from God, who has promised that He will look down upon His humble servants to succour them in the combat, and to impart His own power and strength to them. It was about this time that two novices, admitted on the same day as Alphonsus, lost their vocation; and the good brother used to repeat a thousand times in his old age, and even left it behind

him in writing, that he could attribute his own perseverance to nothing short of the infinite mercies of God.

§ 4.

HIS FIRST VOWS AFTER HIS TWO YEARS' NOVICESHIP,
AND HIS EMPLOYMENT UP TO THE TIME
OF HIS DEATH.

ALPHONSUS spent happily his two years in the novitiate in the practices of a most holy life. He was a perfect model of exact regularity even in the smallest observances and duties of this time of probation, as well as of all the virtues becoming those whom God has called to His service in the Society. After these two years his Superiors, fully satisfied with the sanctity of his life, and most thankful to God for having sent to their house so great an example of virtue, to encourage not only his fellow lay-brothers but every other member of the community, allowed him to take the three vows of religion according to the custom of the Society. This was to him a day of supreme happiness, and it occurred on the second Sunday after Easter, in the year 1573.

Father Bartholomew Coc, rector of the college, received his first vows; and twelve years afterwards with the same joy he was permitted to take the last vows which bound him to the Society for ever, in the presence of Father Alphonsus Romano, visitor of the province at the time. The first duty he had to per-

form was to labour at the building of the church, and to this followed various offices about the house, as for instance, to accompany the fathers in their visits. A short time after, the charge of the porter's lodge and of helping as second sacristan was confided to him, until in course of time our Lord appointed him permanently to the office of porter, which he filled during thirty years without interruption ; and it was in this care of the gate that according to the designs of God he laboured so long, and became so perfect a religious through the faithful practice of every virtue. We come now to speak of the principal of these virtues in due order.

§ 5.

HIS FIDELITY TO HIS THREE VOWS.

THAT we may understand to how high a degree of perfection Alphonsus carried his spirit of poverty and entire detachment, it will be sufficient to read the following passage left in his own hand-writing, which may be accepted as a living expression of what he practised during the forty-six years that he spent in the Society. "You will strive," said he speaking to himself, "to preserve your heart wholly detached from all things, in a profound contempt and hatred of self and of things created, rejoicing whenever what is necessary is debarred you, for thus will you become more like Jesus in His own meekness and poverty.

Your thoughts must be ever raised to God, striving to prevent anything being given to you that is not the very worst and the most unpleasant in every respect, and to die completely to every attachment and anxiety about the fleeting things of this world, that you may abandon yourself, from the very depths of your heart, to the good pleasure of God with regard to all those things that are necessary for this life, nor accept them but with complete indifference, as though not intended for you but for some one else. You will receive them with these sentiments in order to be more like to Jesus our Divine Master, so poor Himself, and in order to place yourself within His arms, stript of all, and attached with Him to His Cross. And that you may be faithful to this resolution and carry it out with joy, you will each day renew your faithful promise and sincere determination." What beautiful words ! What ardour ! And how sublime a perfection ! Who could fail to recognise in this language the true saint, the perfect disciple of Jesus Christ, if only he put in practice these admirable resolutions, and lived in strict fidelity to their spirit ? This, however, is the very point that the process of his beatification has proved.

From the moment that he first placed his foot in the house of God, he regarded himself as a poor mendicant admitted through charity, and unworthy to receive anything given to him. Thus everything appeared to him to be good, convinced as he was that he did not deserve that anything should be reserved for him except what was of the least value and the most unsuitable in the house ; this he desired,

this he sought for with much greater avidity than imperfect religious are desirous of procuring for themselves whatever pleases them most. We have abundant proofs of this in the life of our blessed lay-brother, written by Father Francis Collin, who was himself witness of his virtues, and it pains me very much to be obliged to pass so many of them over in silence, through my wish not to exceed the limits of a short abridgement of his life. For there does not exist a single line of that beautiful memoir which does not present to us a rare example of sanctity, and on those very points in which we can imitate him.

I will cite but one instance, earnestly praying all those of our brothers who may read these pages, to ask themselves two questions after the perusal—(1) Is this example one that I can imitate, or is it not? (2) Am I disposed to imitate it, and to do so with the intention and according to the spirit of my holy protector?

During the Carnival of 1604, the solemn Feast of the Forty Hours was celebrated in the College of Majorea, and by order of the Superiors all the chairs had been taken out of the rooms of the community, to place them in the tribunes for the accommodation of the enormous crowds who flocked to the Adoration. After the feast, when the chairs were restored to the different rooms, God permitted that the one belonging to the humble cell of Brother Alphonsus should be forgotten. This chair stood for a complete year neglected in the place it had occupied at the ceremony, and during the whole of that time the good old man was left without a chair to sit down upon,

or to place his clothes on when he went to bed, and had it not been carried back to his room after the return of the same feast in the following year, he would have remained perfectly content to be deprived of it for the rest of his life; yet a word from him could have regained for him the use of his poor little chair. Now the mighty people of the world would pronounce this an act of unpardonable folly; but one who is a religious, and skilled in the ways of heaven, will judge very differently, and will humble himself profoundly before this memorial of a saint, every page of whose life could give a thousand incidents of the like nature.

As to his vow of chastity, I will only say that there are not many saints, even amongst those already enjoying the vision of God in heaven in reward of the purity of their hearts, who possessed this virtue in a higher or more perfect degree than did our Brother Alphonsus; for there are but few, very few, who had like him to fight against hell for its preservation. It strikes us with horror to recall the picture of those fierce battles which he himself has described, and of which we have just spoken. This terrible contest began in his noviceship, was continued beyond it, and became yet more and more envenomed and pertinacious for six consecutive years.

But since it is of faith that grace from God to assist and support us during these temptations is always bestowed in proportion to the difficulty and danger accompanying them, and that the degrees we attain of angelic virtue and of purity of heart are measured by the extent to which the soul, through the help

of this grace, exerts itself to produce heroic acts of courage during the combat ; so God alone could give exact account of those heroic acts which His faithful servant must have produced during the glorious struggle maintained by him against hell, and against all its treacherous artifices and abominable wiles. Happy Alphonsus, who without ever soiling the beauty of this lovely flower, knew how to estimate the value of purity of soul and of body ! And it was because he knew this that he formed and faithfully carried out the noble resolution which follows, written with his own hand—"You ought to take," says he, "the greatest precautions to obtain and to preserve angelical purity ; you ought to live with the good and firm resolve to die in the cause of chastity, to desire and be ready to suffer, without sin however, all the torments of hell rather than to offend our Lord and our God by a venial sin, still less a mortal sin. Day by day renew in secret this determination three times, choosing a good opportunity, when you can have a whole hour for it if possible."

All these interior exercises, as well as others we shall afterwards speak of, Alphonsus most certainly performed without interrupting the duties of his office, remaining always beside the gate, and without stealing one moment from the charge intrusted to him. Never did he cease to prove himself faithful to his holy resolution ; even after our Lord, touched by the constancy of His servant, had delivered him from these horrible assaults of hell. On the contrary, warned by the experience of the dangers that he had encountered, even after he had become a very old man, he never

felt secure against fresh attacks, nor did he ever place the least confidence in himself, although his heart overflowed with the graces of heaven and burned with the flames of Divine love. Not a shadow of affection for earth remained in him after that Jesus and Mary, visiting him to his unspeakable joy and with the sweetest consolations at the end of this great temptation, which lasted for seven years, delivered for ever his soul from every kind of impure thought or image.

He has left a great many points for imitation under this head to those who, by reason either of their office or ministry, are obliged to hold intercourse with persons of the other sex. To keep his eyes fixed on the ground, his heart raised to heaven, and his tongue occupied with the one subject of persuading such persons of the vanity of the world and bringing them to love our Lord Jesus Christ; such was the course maintained by Alphonsus when obliged to speak to them. He often drew attention to a point which should be carefully borne in mind by every one placed in the same circumstances, that he may preserve true fidelity to his vows; he said that the servants of God are not tempted at the time when they are actually engaged in conversation with women, as this would only put them on their guard; the devil suggests nothing to them then, for he is too full of malice, and wishes to banish all fear from their breasts that they may take less precaution, and that they may place greater confidence in themselves. He waits till the hour of meditation, or till some other time when their thoughts are not so busily

occupied, and then by means of their memory and a thousand imaginations he wages a most cruel war against them.

Never forget, my good brother, while reading these lines, that if you are one of those who under temptation have already learnt by experience their own weakness, you should choose for your particular protector this great servant of God, who will most certainly help you to triumph over your enemy, seeing that he cannot but enjoy immense influence in heaven for that purpose. And if you obtain so great a grace, you will be by no means the first, for already a vast number of souls have testified that the possession of the smallest thing belonging to Alphonsus, a small relic of him, or even the mention of his name, has obtained for them the grace of being freed for ever from these horrible temptations.

And now we must turn to his practice of obedience, which was so perfect that it is almost impossible to do the subject full justice. Obedience seemed to form the leading mark of his sanctity, and we could not give a just idea of this great servant of God if we did not point out the perfection with which he practised this virtue. It is to his own words that we shall have recourse, because a short passage in his notes reveals to us the spirit in which he carried out obedience, though he does not appear to be speaking of himself, but of St. Ignatius. "That soul may be said to be within a short distance of attaining the perfection of obedience, which sees that it is God who commands, after the same manner that the angels see Him in heaven, though with slightly less clearness.

Having reached this point, he who obeys thinks no longer of the man who gives the command, but of God alone who commands through his mouth; he regards therefore none but God, as the angels do when God commands them. Those who, in the virtue of obedience, thus imitate the angels of heaven, pay no attention to any other point; without discussion with themselves, in entire and blind obedience they perform that which they have been told, even when it would appear impossible, difficult, or useless, nay, an act of imprudence or folly. They acknowledge no point save this: God orders it, and it is always good to do what He commands, be it even like His command to Abraham to offer up his son Isaac. It cannot be denied that to arrive at this perfection of obedience requires one to be holy as the angels, yet this is the standard which has been placed before us by our father, St. Ignatius."

No one can be ignorant of the sublime teaching of our holy Founder with respect to this virtue of obedience, a virtue which he has especially selected as the particular character of the sanctity of his children. The Society has ever gloried, though with humility, in the practice of an obedience that is prompt and blind in everything which is not evidently of the nature of sin, resting on the maxim or interior conviction, in the full spirit of which it believes, almost as though it were an article of faith, that whatsoever the Superior commands is really the command and will of God.

In proportion to the strength of hold which this firm conviction maintains over the soul, we observe

how readily the desire of quick execution expands in the very act of obeying, and with it the reaching forth of the will to love that which has been commanded, whence obedience grows still more perfect. But if we can mount higher and reach a yet more sublime point of perfection, so high that we cannot even touch it without a very special light and grace from God, like the atmosphere which surrounds the angelic ministers of His will in heaven, then our soul is, so to speak, no longer travelling along the path of faith, but is in possession of the splendours of the heavenly life, and being received within its light she in all things and at all times looks upon God who commands her ; while man, the minister of this God, disappears.

One so high in sanctity as Ignatius, our founder, attained to this degree, and Alphonsus obtained the like grace by the exertions and sacrifices which he was obliged to make in order to follow perfectly, for many years, the common life of our houses.

I have felt it necessary to make this observation that we may have the key and explanation, not of one act alone, nor of two, but of a thousand recorded by the writers of his life, actions which might easily appear follies and madnesses rather than fruits of virtue, to the eyes not merely of persons of the world who understand nothing of the things of God, but of many others also, who with fair reason persuade themselves that they are obedient.

Those acts which strike us, when we read the lives of other saints, as rare and singular marks of a simplicity of which we have but few instances, as, for

instance, when they interpreted the commands of Superiors to the letter, and to the letter obeyed them without allowing themselves the shadow of discussion in their own minds, and without dreaming of the consequences of a blind performance of what they were told to do; such acts formed in Alphonsus his ordinary method of obedience. Thus when told by his Superior to set out for India, he took up his stick and his hat and asked the porter to attend to the gate because he was leaving. Another telling him one day to remain quietly in his place, only wishing that he should not move in order to make room for him in the tribune, Alphonsus took his words in their literal meaning and remained tranquilly in the same place till supper time, when his absence led to a search being made for him through all the house. On another occasion he calmly remained seated on a bench till the following morning, because at the moment when the bell sounded the end of evening recreation and he was on the point of leaving, the Superior, engaged at the time in reading a letter, asked him not to stir just then. When suffering from weakness he had been enjoined to take a mouthful of bread towards the middle of the forenoon; in consequence of this order every morning at the hour appointed he went to the refectory and took exactly one mouthful and no more, and went away again, a practice which he continued for a long time, till at length the Superior was told of it by some of those who had observed him. Once when a person wished to speak to him at the gate, the Superior, of whom he asked permission, told him he might go and just say

two words to him, upon which he went, and having said to him: *Deo gratias*, immediately left him. When asked on two different occasions if he knew how to swim, he replied he could, and on the Superior further asking him to show him how, he at once cast himself on the ground and began stretching out his arms and his legs as though in the water contending with a strong current; the last time that he did this with all simplicity he was more than eighty years old. The Superior of the house observing, at a particular meal, that Brother Alphonsus was not eating anything, sent the server to encourage him and bid him take a little, the server in carrying his message told him to eat the dish that was placed before him, whereupon the good brother, who had lost all his teeth, began to scrape the edges of the poor plate before him with his knife in his endeavours to begin and eat it, and he would certainly have made an end of it, had not a father seated near convinced him that he must be acting in opposition to the wishes of the Superior.

More yet remains to be told. Even in spiritual matters, in which it is so difficult to despoil ourselves entirely of our own judgment, Alphonsus obeyed just as exactly as in temporal things. My limits, however, will not admit of my quoting examples, and they can be read in a more extended life of the Saint. I will make only this remark, that in spiritual matters, as in temporal, it could never be said he was in a single instance inconsistent or false to himself, and could he have lived for ever in the Society, yet he would never have interrupted the constant succession of these heroic acts of perfect obedience.

In proof of this we have but to be reminded how often during meditation he practised himself in reflecting what he would do if commanded to perform certain things difficult, repugnant, or even impossible ; and nothing, absolutely nothing, appeared to him stronger than the will which he had to obey literally in everything. Thus when a father asked him one day how he would act if the Superior ordered him to carry a letter to Father Provincial on the mainland and there was no means of crossing over, the good brother replied without hesitation, " A thousand times have I already thought of this, and each time I have firmly believed that, did the order really come, I would cast myself into the water, in the full assurance that God would, without the help of any ship, support me across the waves, since it would be by His order that I would go. Nor would there be anything strange in that, for my father St. Ignatius said that if the Pope, at that time his only Superior, ordered him he would calmly traverse the sea in a poor bark all broken, without either sail, mast, or oars."

Superiors understood completely the dispositions of the heroic soul of Alphonsus, and they were wont to say that it was not always so simple and easy a thing to command him what he was to do, because he would carry out absolutely and to the letter whatever was said to him. But to counterbalance this difficulty they found it, on the other hand, an immense advantage and satisfaction for them to feel assured that when they had recommended anything to him it would be done exactly as they wished, and it was to him that they always spoke when they wanted a particular thing

to be done with promptitude and with minute and exact conscientiousness.

This satisfaction of Superiors in Alphonsus, true reflection of the esteem in which God Himself held His faithful servant, must beyond doubt have been often for our blessed brother a sweet compensation and comfort for the contradictions, more or less pointed and hard to bear, to which his manner of behaviour in this matter must have exposed him, since he lived amongst men who could not all understand or imitate such sanctity and perfection. But that which must have much more sustained and encouraged him in despising human judgments and thoughts of earth was the recollection of the judgments of God, who is alone the Supreme Judge of all men, and who approved his conduct.

And this, again, is fully proved in the following anecdote, which I have selected from a number of others. Our good brother had been for a long time ailing, and the medicine prescribed had been powerless to give him any relief. The Superior enjoined him to take every morning a certain draught which he believed to be excellent for him, but the only effect of which was to increase his malady. As the medicine was really and actively injurious to him, in proportion as the brother took it he felt his complaint getting worse, till at last both health and life were in danger, without its ever occurring to him to breathe a word of this to the Superior; he mentioned his difficulty to God alone, and God, to reward his obedience and his sacrifice, suddenly restored his health.

But even this trial of his obedience was not fully

consummated. Alphonsus fell back again into the same complaint after some little interval, and the good Superior, delighted no doubt by the imagined success of his remedy, ordered him to begin to take it again, and the good brother obeying, every morning drunk in, we may say, death with this poison ; a fact which became at last so evident, that the saint felt himself bound to pray with very especial fervour that God would make it known to him whether it was His will that he should again offer up this sacrifice. Scarcely had he begun to gather his thoughts for prayer when he suddenly felt a lively and ardent desire to suffer all the torments of hell, were this necessary or possible, rather than depart by ever so little from the commandment of his Superior, and this desire was instantly followed by an unalterable resolution to remain silent, and go on taking the poisonous draught. At the same moment he was favoured by a visit from heaven, in which not only did our Lord pour abundant consolations into his soul, but made him understand that by this sublime act he had gained greater merit than by all the other acts he had performed during the whole course of his past life ; God then miraculously restored him to health by means of that very same wonderful medicine, which according to its own nature could only have hastened his death.

There cannot, therefore, be the slightest doubt but that God accepted and blessed the obedience of Alphonsus, and as God cannot approve of that which is not really good and holy, his blind, simple, and literal obedience, that admitted of no mental discussion, though it may perhaps call up a blush

to the cheek of those who fall so far short as we do of his light, yet was in itself so heavenly that it transformed his Superior into the person of God, and his own obedience into that of the angels.

May such admirable examples as these encourage and animate our dear brothers, and move them forward to imitate their holy protector in everything which in obedience like his can be truly imitated, and which will make their obedience beautiful and excellent ; may they admire, at all events, that which cannot easily be imitated ; may they praise and bless God in His Saints, for this is one of the most precious fruits we can gather from reading their lives. The example of our grand Saint, so perfect in his obedience, impresses upon us this clear lesson, that we ought to obey God in that manner, and to that perfection, with which He wishes to be obeyed.

§ 6.

HIS EXTREME MORTIFICATION ; HIS PATIENCE ; AND
HIS PROFOUND HUMILITY.

POOR, chaste, obedient to the very point of heroism, Alphonsus could not fail to love also mortification and humility, since it is impossible to love and practise the former virtues, without esteeming and loving these also. The soul that is poor, chaste, and obedient, by this its detachment from everything, by its purity, and its submission, controls and check-

mates all its passions, and more especially the love of ourselves, and the idea of our own peculiar excellence.

It is principally in its power to quench all earthly desires and those feelings even that are allowable and innocent, and in its grace of singularly deep humility as the fruit of constant self-examination and of the habitual practice of self-mastery in everything, that the life of our blessed Saint appears to us so marvellous, so striking, that we are obliged constantly to remind ourselves that these are facts recounted by one who has seen them all with his own eyes, and is worthy of all credit; and, further than this, that Rome, where every point is so scrutinized and searched into, and every witness so carefully tested, has set her seal of approbation to these pious narratives, and has acknowledged their authenticity, while with anything short of this they would be altogether incredible.

In fact, the senses of our holy brother, so far from being to him the source or instrument of pleasure, were always sacrificed by mortification on the altar of God's glory. But the narrow limits within which I must confine myself in this short abridgement of his life scarce permits me even to point to these subjects merely in passing. Yet I must give one example of his care in the custody of his eyes. He chanced unfortunately one day to cast his glance through a window looking on the street, so that it appeared to him to have rested on a woman passing by. He turned aside his eye at once, yet felt so sad and disconsolate that during many years of his life

after, every time that he passed the same spot he hastened to cast himself on the ground before a picture of the crucifixion which stood near; and tearing his hair and striking his breast violently, he heaped a thousand opprobrious epithets on himself, in order to humble and cover himself with shame.

In a word, we may say that all these fears and precautions of Alphonsus were the result of the terrible struggle which he had to maintain against hell for seven years, and that there is nothing extraordinary in his believing himself bound after that to proceed with so great prudence, and to guard his senses with so much rigour. What is far more wonderful and surprising is the conviction that we have never observed any one, even the most sensual and the most abandoned to his passions, run with so much ardour after the pleasures of the world, either lawful or unlawful, as that with which Alphonsus sought to crucify his senses, ceaselessly urged on by a spirit of mortification which made him refuse everything that could have been in the slightest degree agreeable to him.

During forty years and more, no instance can be remembered of his even once asking permission to take a short walk; he was never seen to assist at any of the feasts of the College, or at any diversion in which its members took part, and at that time these occurred much more frequently than they do now; he even denied himself the pleasure, however innocent, of enjoying the beauty of the country or of any natural scenery. He could not submit to pass a moment, even during recreations, in speaking of useless matters. He could not take pleasure in the

scent of a single flower, or in eating or drinking anything for the sake of the slightest gratification ; on the contrary, each hour was employed by him in mortifying every desire of nature and in crucifying his senses. He would never take salt or any other seasoning for his food, and was equally ready to eat of dishes well cooked as of those half raw, eagerly profiting by any act of forgetfulness or negligence as a means of fresh penance to himself. Thus, in case he might be perceived, he partook quickly of anything that was less good on the table, pieces of bad meat, sometimes the spoiled or tainted remains of dishes, such as not even dogs or cats would have been willing to touch. In short, Alphonsus was a martyr in will, and whether sick or in good health could never satisfy the desire that burned within him of fresh mortification and suffering.

Fasts, disciplines constantly taken, and to blood, chains the most torturing, all these were his delight. He never ceased asking permission for these from his Superior, and when, on account of his great age and infirmities, any hesitation was shown in granting them, Alphonsus found means of indemnifying himself, being able, without asking permission, to suffer still more in other ways and to his own contentment. Every one in the house knew that he never drove off a fly that bit him, nor even a mosquito, that he never killed any of those insects whose bite is so inconvenient and so painful in a hot climate, and which during the hot summer exist only at the expense of the unhappy inhabitants, whom they devour and with whose blood they refresh themselves. He was

not heard to complain of either cold or heat ; never did he go near a fire or stand in the sun ; he never rubbed his hands together even, nor sat down in a convenient posture, and for most of the time he stood with one foot only on the ground, holding up the other for self-mortification.

If, in order to judge of the spirit of mortification in a saint, it be enough to know the extent to which he carried his practice of patience, we can say that Alphonsus was, on this point above all others, a perfect marvel. For more than thirty successive years he practised this virtue in an admirable manner, whilst bearing the keys of an office always so difficult, and so fatiguing. It may also be said that his patience was sometimes sorely tried by persons who looked with an evil eye on his extreme precision and scrupulous attention to the observance of every rule of the porter. But, above all this, he had need of an invincible patience during many years to suffer in silence and without complaint the brutality of a miserable creature, who acted towards him as a savage tormentor. This was the barber of the college, who, enraged as it would appear at sight of the blood of his victim, took pleasure in cutting him every time, and in marking his face with terrible gashes.

The self-denial and patience of Brother Alphonsus drew their charm from the greatness of his humility. His virtue continually influenced his heart with the true hatred which he had against himself, and this hatred was the fruit of the perfect knowledge he possessed of his own nothingness. "One of the greatest pleasures of my life," he says in some part

of his writings, "of which I have always preserved the secret in my own heart, is that God having opened my eyes to see my own misery, I cannot look upon myself without horror, as an infected dead body, hideous, and abominable to behold ; I hate myself, I cannot endure myself, I would desire neither to see myself, nor to hear myself, nor to be conscious of myself, in consequence of the aversion and dislike which I have conceived of myself ; could I but fly from myself, from this body of corruption—my cruel enemy—and escape far, far away, I would do so with delight, hoping never more to see it, nor hear mention of myself. How happy would I be if I could only thus get away from myself ! In the world, if a person has some enemy who persecutes him, he does everything in his power to avoid him, even quitting his own country and voluntarily exiling himself if need be, and in this way he can find some rest and live in peace. But for me this is impossible ; I cannot fly and escape this body, my cruel enemy. This is my trouble, and it is a trouble very hard to bear."

What more can we add ? Alphonsus then regarded himself as his own personal enemy ; he hated himself with his whole heart, as an object of abomination. In another part he remarks, when treating of the interior practice of virtue : " It will be useful to utter reproaches against yourself after this manner, and persevere in the daily ill-treatment of yourself, and entering into yourself in order to review all the horrors of your whole life, exclaim against yourself with indignation : ' O wicked beast, old in iniquity, miserable, all covered with sins, fool that you are, a corrupt and horrible

dead body ! How can you still live amongst men, you who are so depraved ? . . . How can the earth refrain from opening its mouth to engulf you ? Why are you not already in hell ? ” &c.

All this, and more still, may be easily written or spoken with the lips, it is true ; but that which is difficult, very difficult, unless there be an inexhaustible fund of sincere humility in the heart, is to conform the life and actions to these words, and to continue to do so at all times and on every occasion, and to behave as Alphonsus did, proving that he spoke with all truth when he called himself unworthy of any esteem, or rather, worthy of every mark of contempt and of every outrage that could be heaped on him, and in this profound sense of nothingness he sought every opportunity of obtaining the last place. He never complained of anything, nay, he rejoiced in heart if he was passed over. He rendered to Priests, and to those who were one day to become so, particular marks of reverent-respect, to such an extent even that had these marks been shown by any one less known for his humility, they might have been considered exaggerated or affected ; as, for instance, when he would at once quit the lavatory, lift off his cap with a hand still wet, or make any other movement to leave the way instantly free for a Priest or a scholastic, who might have come to the entrance of the refectory to wash his hands at the time when Alphonsus had begun to do the same. We might add a thousand similar acts.

Towards his equals also, the other lay-brothers, his manner was full of respect, even to an extreme point.

It was no effort to him to keep the rule bidding us regard interiorly all others as our superiors, a matter sufficiently difficult, especially when, either in the supernatural or in the natural order, the person practising this virtue has any advantage over others which might expose him to the temptation of self-satisfaction or pride. Alphonsus was placed in this position, for in the knowledge of mystical theology he certainly excelled, as the writings which he left behind him prove. But never could Satan succeed in inspiring him with this sentiment, though he often strained every effort to do so ; nay, in the midst of the perfect storm of proud thoughts by which his life was assailed, the lovely virtue of humility only strengthened itself the more, and cast roots still deeper into his soul.

§ 7.

HIS LOVE FOR GOD AND FOR HIS NEIGHBOUR.

HAD it been possible to sound fully the depths of humility in the soul of our holy brother Alphonsus, or to sum up the degrees of hatred which he bore against himself, we could then have decided, within some distance at least, the degrees of the infinite love which he entertained towards God, and of the sacred flame which was slowly consuming him during so many years. For love is like a house, of which humility is the basement ; and we must not forget

that the foundations should be always more or less deeply laid in proportion to the intended height of the building itself.

As regards the subject of our first article—his humility, we could never hope to reach to its depths, for God alone could measure it in the soul of His servant; and what I have already said, as well as what the more detailed lives tell us of him, is all equally insufficient to give us a clear view on this point. As to the second—his love, we can have as little hope of learning much about it, for love was the summit, the very crowning point of his sanctity, being the perfect observance of the complete law. We would have, indeed, much difficulty in comprehending even the sublime language itself of the holy Saint, who studied and acquired this Divine science of love after a manner very different indeed from the method in which human sciences are learnt. Let me begin by begging you to try and carry out yourselves all that is included in the first principles of this doctrine.

We can form some slight estimate of the excellence of the love that burned in the heart of Alphonsus by calling to mind how much our Lord Himself esteemed it, and by contemplating all the admirable gifts with which, in return, He enriched his soul, either when He gave him such wonderful power to touch and convert hearts, and after thus changing them to lead them to the highest perfection; or when He bestowed on him the gift of miracles and prophecy, as has been proved in the clearest manner during the process for his beatification. And yet these are,

after all, but insufficient proof, for they comprise only gratuitous gifts, *gratis data* to use a theological term, gifts which do not in themselves make a man holier, as God could accord them even to a sinner, though He does not ordinarily do so; and their end is rather to benefit others than the soul of him who has received them. Moreover, these proofs are foreign to the object I have before me, for I do not wish to show to what extent Alphonsus received astonishing and marvellous gifts, but much rather how far he proved himself worthy of these favours, and how he constantly merited them by his deeds and by his sublime practice of virtue, for these are not only most admirable, but at the same time within our power, and therefore our duty, to imitate.

And, in truth, to the man who shall be willing to imitate him in the unfailing vigilance which he exercised over every movement of his heart, in his absolute detachment from all things, in his incessant labours and care to show himself faithful to the smallest recommendations and to each counsel given by the Saints, teaching him how to meditate according to the modes and practice generally used; to the man who shall be willing to imitate him in taking as the point to be aimed at in his meditations, not only the driving out of the slightest defects from his heart, were they even lurking for self-defence deep in its innermost recesses, but also the doing violence to himself in his fervour and enthusiasm of zeal to acquire all the religious virtues, and again in his practice of meditation, to which he was so devoted throughout his whole life,

following the rules given, and repeating with a firm, unchanging will each of the solid and fruitful subjects of the illuminative and purgative ways ; to the man, I say, who shall be willing to imitate all these points, and not one of them is impossible or even difficult with the help of God's grace, to him shall it be also granted, without doubt, to understand by his own experience what Blessed Alphonsus found in the path of toil and pain, that as all came from love he must repay all with love, inflaming more and more his soul at this holy fire, for truly it is in doing this that the very essence and fruit of divine love dwells for him who merits it.

It is given to the faithful religious to comprehend the full meaning of these words of our blessed brother, in which he allowed to overflow from his heart the torrents of affective and effective love in one stream, crying out with transport that he wished no other life, no other existence than the existence and life of God, and that he would gladly lose his life a thousand times, were that possible, for the love of his own best beloved. He added that when pronouncing these words, "he felt in his soul a love so tender, so ardent towards God, that had God granted him the grace to die at that moment it would have been the greatest blessedness and joy to him in the whole world, because he would have done that which was pleasing to God, he would have found himself for ever delivered from sin ; whilst a single sin, even venial, caused him more fear and horror than all the punishments possible in this life." He remarked moreover, "that God had revealed to him with His

light, in the clearest manner, that through His grace one could endure every suffering possible in this world, and even the torments of hell, without falling into sin, which alone offends God, and that thus a man ought not to fear suffering, however great that might be, but only fear sin as the one great offence against His infinite goodness and majesty."

But what is most important for our consideration here, and a point we should try to understand through the practice of it, is how one can write with truth and put into practice that which our great Saint has left in one part of his notes on spiritual matters, adding a particular mark to draw attention to the importance of these few lines. "A certain Saint said that if God, at any moment, revealed to the angels that it was His will that they should cast themselves down to burn in hell, they would instantaneously, and with ineffable joy, precipitate themselves thither in order to be pleasing to Him. And, besides, that were it possible to see God and dwell in His presence with some small venial sin still upon the soul, or else suffer in hell without this sin, God leaving the choice to their own free will, they would rather renounce the glory and happiness of heaven and be free from this sin, than enjoy heaven's glory and happiness with the stain on them of a fault displeasing to God. The soul which has attained to this point, and to the reality and practice of it, is perfect in the love of God, and is ready to suffer anything rather than commit sin, even the smallest." Now our Saint had most truly and actually, both in

feeling and practice, attained to this sublime height, therefore he was perfect in the love of God.

I consider myself justified in not dwelling on his ecstasies and raptures of fervent love, or his trances and absolute loss of sense and of the exercise of every faculty of his soul, during which he remained incapable of doing the least material or external action, unless necessary for the faithful accomplishment of the duties of his office, this being a work which he performed only through love. He remained at such times entirely absorbed in the desire of pleasing God, without a thought in his mind except of simple joy and satisfaction in God, until he could apply to himself his own words, so well worthy of being placed as a crown upon this subject: "Yes, this is all my happiness, the one joy of my soul in this life. And this love of God has so much power over my heart that were I in hell, yet assured that such was the good pleasure of my beloved Saviour, I could not feel its torments, because my joy would be so great as to drive away despair, and make it appear as nothing in comparison." We may judge from this how exalted and perfect, even in this life, the love of God may become in a faithful and generous soul.

Equally useless would it be to add anything further of the great love which filled his breast for every object closely connected with the best beloved of his soul. I will say nothing here of his extraordinary devotion in assisting at Mass. All who saw him serving at the altar were deeply impressed, and the Priests themselves were always most anxious to have him for their server. Nor will I say much of

the ardent sighs that burst from him at Holy Communion, and were more like flames from some volcano ; he was quite unable to refrain from these when receiving this sacred Bread of angels, nor could he speak of it without tears of tenderness flowing from his eyes. I should pass over, too, the signal and rare favours granted him in serving Mass, and after receiving into his breast the Holy Victim who had just immolated Himself on the altar ; for would not God have ceased to be the lover of souls if He allowed Himself to be outdone in generosity by those who love Him with ardour and self-abandonment.

I do not intend to speak of these, nor of the devotion which Alphonsus showed to particular saints, nor of his peculiarly and wholly filial tenderness towards the Society, more especially as bearing the name of Jesus and belonging truly to Him, and because of his own grace of vocation to it, a grace that contained within it so many others, but above all the happiness of living with angels destined to see God for all eternity. For Alphonsus could regard his brothers in no other light, and with these feelings he loved them, he placed them all in his heart, and in spirit pressed them to it as often as he saw them united together in community ; he mentally recommended himself to their prayers, and begged of God the grace of being united one day with them in glory, feeling persuaded that each one of them was sure of heaven.

And though I may be told that by laying all these matters aside I have omitted just that which was most interesting in a life wherein everything is full

of wonder, yet I must even at the sacrifice of many points of interest keep to my plan of a short abridgement.

I confess, however, that it would cost me too much were I to pass over in silence his very great love toward his neighbour, for it is a branch of this divine tree of holiness and love of God. This had taken so strong a hold of the heart of Alphonsus, that it should be at least mentioned. In the first place he was consumed with zeal for the salvation of souls, he would have wished to have saved them all, and the most ardent desires for their good burned within him; he would gladly, were it possible, have suffered all the pains of hell rather than that one single soul should be sentenced to them. It was the constant prayer of his heart that these pious desires should become more and more intense, a prayer which he always accompanied with the most terrible penances that he might obtain for the words of the preacher fruit a hundred-fold, and often, in fact, without leaving his place at the gate he obtained many conversions, God Himself having revealed that they were due to His faithful servant. So was it also in regard of the reconciliation of families and of a still larger number of persons, which had been looked upon as impossible. He felt, besides, so deep a compassion for all the sufferings of his neighbour, whether of soul or body, that the painful sight of them at the gate of the college, or the recital which he heard of their misfortunes overwhelmed him with sorrow. He thought of them day and night, he was continually praying for those in distress, with so

much fervour as often to obtain a miracle in their behalf, such, for instance, as the one granted in Majorca during the famine in 1613. At another time he asked and obtained that a terrible affliction threatening another should be visited on himself instead, and like a true victim of love he offered this up to God, and suffered in his own person through his tender compassion for others. I must now pass from this subject and from a number of others, with the exception of one point that I cannot bring myself to omit, and shall treat of separately.

§ 8.

HIS TENDER LOVE TOWARD THE HOLY VIRGIN.

It were indeed impossible not to dwell on this subject, and to do so at some length, for it was a leading trait and especial characteristic in the sanctity of good Brother Alphonsus, besides that it enters so suitably into our line of thought and into my design in undertaking this short sketch.

That devotion to Mary was a very particular feature in the graces of this privileged soul is well known, and may at the same time be very easily proved. That it agrees well with my plan to speak of it here is as evident, since my object is no other than to excite our good lay-brothers to perform faithfully the duties of their holy vocation by practising the virtues of the

religious state, of which Blessed Alphonsus was the most finished model. But nothing can help more effectually to the acquisition of his virtues than the imitation of the filial love and tenderness which this good brother always entertained towards the holy Virgin.

This affectionate devotion to our Lady we may say Alphonsus possessed from his cradle. It was at first a young and delicate plant, but it grew so rapidly with his years that it soon produced fruit of exquisite beauty and wonderful perfume, and it must always be the same with us when we correspond with fidelity to the graces of heaven.

Two things combined to cause such rapid progress in this happy soul, for if on the one hand from his earliest years Mary made it evident that she had the intention of enriching it with all the treasures of her maternal heart, so on the other, the heart of Alphonsus was as early in rendering to her the most lively acknowledgments, and persevered in this return of love to his very last breath. And if Mary chose to be the mother of Alphonsus by very especial ties, as she expressed to him a thousand times, Alphonsus for his part fully understood how much a tenderness so great demanded of him in return, and was determined to merit her love by showing himself always and to his very death, both in mind and in work, a son worthy of such a mother. How truly he was this a few pages will abundantly prove. Mary acknowledges us for her children if we resemble Jesus, her Firstborn, and if we have a real and true affection for her: and she especially cherishes and loves us in proportion to

the especial love that we bear her, and to the closeness of our resemblance to her Son. In what proportion then was she bound to love Alphonsus, what graces to confer upon a saint who had laboured with so great ardour that he might approach close to and imitate Jesus.

But this tenderly beloved son of Mary, did not exert himself to merit her graces only in this indirect way, he did all he could to win the heart of his Mother, by rendering direct service to her with all zeal and affection. One of the exercises he adopted for his own progress in perfection he thus describes—“You will always have before your eyes the most sweet Jesus and the gentle Mary, His Mother—Jesus on the right of your heart and Mary on your left—and you shall say to them : Jesus and Mary, my most gentle teachers and sovereigns, make me to suffer and to die for love of you. Do this, and you will find yourself always advancing more and more in their love.” Jesus and Mary were not long in accepting this sacrifice and its holy object, and as he himself tells us, on one occasion when he began to say his beads, which was his favourite prayer, with more than usual devotion, both appeared to him. The Divine Infant passed to his right and seemed to Alphonsus to enter into his heart to take possession of it, and Mary, who held in her hand a new heart of great beauty, placed it on the other side close to his own and herself entered his heart ; so that both the Mother and her Divine Son took possession of the heart of Alphonsus and did not leave it, because many years after so great a favour, when the holy Saint gave

account of this heavenly vision he asserted that from that day he had never failed for a single instant to feel their presence in his heart, on either side, breathing the same consolation and the same happiness into his soul.

And yet, that we may see what our good brother himself thought of this singular grace, and of so many other extraordinary graces from heaven, I quote here what he has left in writing on this point, as spoken of a third person. "Never," he says, "did this soul draw from them, nor from other favours, the least thought of pride; on the contrary, she lives in constant fear and dread, trembling at the possibility of their being an illusion; and, had God left her the choice, she would rather have followed some other path, if this would have been for the greater glory of God and for its own good, because of the very great danger in which it found itself placed. She would rather, then, have declined these favours, as he who feels himself drawn towards evil would take to flight and escape from the temptation, while she remained as indifferent as though this matter had happened to some other person far away off in the Indies, and not to her. Sanctity consists in the love of God and of one's neighbour, in profound humility, in patience, obedience, resignation, and imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ. On all these points there is no danger, but in the reception of extraordinary graces danger always lurks."

No danger need be feared, as he knew well, in loving the holy Virgin Mary with all the ardour possible, and in devoting himself more and more to

learn of her, meditating on her singular prerogatives with the desire to love her more, and to make her more known to men. And he availed himself of every means suited to his state of life to gain hearts for her, for he was not able to rest satisfied, even with doing all that he himself unaided could do.

It has been narrated of him that the constant passing and repassing of his beads had formed hard skin on the extremity of the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. And however tired of recommending devotion to the Blessed Virgin as the surest means of obtaining everything for heaven, while in the brief moments that his office of porter left free to him, he copied out a few short prayers or composed others himself to give to the young scholars who attended our classes, or who came to the gate for any other purpose.

He never omitted his fast every Saturday, and on the eves of the feasts of the holy Virgin, his Mother; but the vigil of the Assumption was for him a fast of especial rigour. He spoke to Mary as a young child would do, to whom she had given a day's holiday; he literally ran to cast himself at her feet and hide himself behind her mantle, when any temptation assailed him, or when he felt depressed and his mind darkened by any passing cloud, and then he confided to her his trouble in accents of tender love. But the glance of his eye testified to the confidence which filled his heart, and more than once this good Mother ravished his soul far above all the things of this earth, and replied to him in language at once tender and affectionate, as on the

day when she asked him—"How, Alphonsus, my son, is it that you do not wish me to love you, when you love me so much!" And at another time, as he was taking the holy Virgin for his advocate with Jesus to obtain some grace or other, she said to him—"Oh, yes, Alphonsus, my son, I readily promise it to you, and I will perform it." And yet again while he was still young, when with all the simplicity of that age he cried out to Mary—"O my Mother, if you only knew how much I love you! Ah! you do not love me as much, I am sure." His good and tender Mother appearing to him deigned to answer—"It is not, my child, as you imagine: it is I who love you far more than you can love me!"

Our Blessed Lady has given us another mark of her very great love for Alphonsus in an act no less miraculous. While he was climbing, one day, with extreme fatigue a hill at a little distance from Palma, he saw the Queen of Heaven apparently full of compassion at the painful efforts of her servant, who was too wearied to get on any further; with a handkerchief which she held, whiter than the snow, she wiped the perspiration from the face of the old man, wearing all the time a sweet smile upon her lips. The vision restored the strength of Alphonsus and filled his soul with a flood of heavenly consolations, so gentle and so abundant that the recollection of this great and extraordinary favour could never pass from his memory.

Alphonsus showed his gratitude for all these favours by offering to Mary the most touching proofs of his love and fidelity, above all by defending the dignity and honour of his Mother against all gainsayers. A

thousand times would he have given up his life and shed his blood to make her known and beloved by the whole world, and to gain the proclamation of her Immaculate Conception as an article of faith. On one occasion, notwithstanding his extreme humility, in the presence of many fathers of the house, he spoke for long, with a countenance on fire, on the truth and the grandeur of this incomparable privilege ; and he declared that, if the Superior did but allow it, he was ready to run through the streets publishing this mystery. Nor could we have better proof that his whole heart and soul were in the matter, than the fervour with which he honoured, in this great Queen, the most glorious and the most precious of her prerogatives, or the efforts he made to increase more and more devotion to Mary in the hearts of all, whether members of the Society or strangers.

To conclude then this interesting subject, we claim a place for Alphonsus Rodriguez amongst those children and servants of the Blessed Virgin who have received very especial favours from her upon earth, and we believe fully that he is now a most powerful advocate and interpreter in heaven for obtaining, in behalf of those who invoke him, the grace of spotless purity, and of tender filial devotion towards Mary, as the effectual means of preserving this beautiful virtue in the heart.

§ 9.

HIS LAST ILLNESS, AND HIS HOLY DEATH.

THE hour of recompense and of reward for Alphonsus drew nigh, after all his labours and hard combats, and after so many years spent in the constant practice of all virtue. One might say that God wished to fill up to the brim the chalice of sufferings, with which this ardent soul was to be, as it were, inebriated, and which it had always the greatest desire to undergo, that it might purify itself still more during the five months that its painful sickness lasted.

He suffered from a frightful complication of maladies which puzzled all the resources of art, and set at naught the skill of physicians, as well as the most tender and zealous care of Superiors and brothers.

This sickness, which had no especial name, seems to have been sent only to try and to afflict the good and holy man in order that it might all the more enrich his soul with grace.

During these last months, not one single kind of temptation was left out by which the cruel enemy of our souls could assail him. Filled with rage, and knowing well that little more chance now remained for him, Satan endeavoured to triumph within a few hours over a courage, which for the space of so many years he had never been able to shake. Dryness of spirit, impatience, profound discouragement, interior

desolations and depression, extreme fears, and despair at the thought of faults committed or which might still be committed against chastity—no point was neglected by this implacable enemy, who made use now of one, now of another, and sometimes of all combined, employing every artifice and every weapon, yet in each case with a result totally opposed to his abominable designs.

In fine, just as the last actions and efforts of the natural life are the most rapid, and as before the light goes out it casts the brightest flicker of all, in like manner the holy soul of our good brother, during the last few days he spent upon earth, seemed to give a nobler and more wonderful proof than ever of the possession of every virtue. He has left us the example more especially of patience and resignation, of humility, of confidence, of piety and the love of God, in the very midst of these horrible assaults. "I have slept for a quarter of an hour," he replied one day, to a young scholastic who asked him how he had passed the night, "and look upon this as a misfortune because during that time I was not suffering."

An exceedingly deep humility could alone have given him the victory in another very peculiar kind of trial. While he was in a state of such aridity and distraction, as to prevent his reciting an *Our Father*, or even remembering it, in the midst of this darkness and faintness still more increased by the intolerable sufferings of his malady, which distressed the hearts of those near him, and who could afford him no relief, he cried out—"Yet more, Lord, yet more suffering, but with it more love and patience!" This was his

ordinary prayer, and our Lord, who was preparing for him a crown of glory proportionate to his combat, granted him the double grace he prayed for ; more particularly during the last three months, when, through the violence of his complaint he was obliged to rest always on one side. He was not able to move from this position except when he received Holy Communion, three times a week ; on which occasions he managed by a kind of miracle to move himself slightly and make an indication of reverence, and when a Priest came to visit him he made incredible efforts to lift his cap.

These dreadful bodily pains did not cease till within three days of his death, though the frightful sufferings and torments of his mind passed sooner away during a visit which he received from the two beloved guests of his soul, who seemed to have forgotten him in the sorest point of his conflict. At sight of the first ray of the heavenly light surrounding the persons of Jesus and Mary, the army of devils that besieged him took to flight in terror, just as at the first streaks of the dawn, the foul birds of the night fly with haste to their hiding-places. In this visit of Jesus and Mary, which lasted for the space of an hour, as was affirmed on oath in the ecclesiastical process by a father, to whom Alphonsus himself mentioned it before his death, and who during his own life repeated the incident over and over again, the holy brother heard from the lips of Jesus and Mary words of heavenly sweetness, containing promises so consoling as to compensate abundantly for all that he had already suffered, and fill him with

the utmost readiness to endure all he had yet to undergo.

He held constant communion with God in the most tender colloquies, during which he often spoke aloud when no one happened to be near; but if others were present his humility allowed him to pray only in his own heart, though with all the fervour of divine love, or perhaps he asked some one to read a few pages of a spiritual book suitable to his state of health.

His last hour now approached, though it was not so close at hand as those about him thought, when it was decided he should receive Extreme Unction. This he did with the most admirable devotion after making his confession, though he himself felt sure he had yet a week to live. Beyond doubt God permitted this haste on the part of the Superiors that He might afford Alphonsus a fresh means of closing his life with an act of profound humility, for he was visited with a feeling of such deep sorrow at having said or done something by means of which the infirmarian had discovered his knowledge of the day on which he was to die, especially when one of the community inquired into the truth of it, that he resolved not to speak at all again, except to thank those who stood beside his bed and nursed him with so much zeal and attention.

His bodily sufferings, which had disappeared for the past three days, all at once returned as though they were the last stroke aimed by the executioner at its victim. It was evident that the end was now at hand, and the news having spread through the house, all ran to assist at his death, so great was their

desire to be present. While they were pressing forward with this pious intention, Alphonsus was in an agony and kept his eyes closed ; suddenly he opened them, and fixing his look on those who surrounded him, smiled sweetly to all a farewell that must have filled every one with a consolation time could never efface. Then, as he cast his glance on the crucifix which he held in his hand, making to it as deep an inclination of reverence as he could, he pronounced distinctly the name of Jesus, with emphasis on the last syllable, and so rendered up that soul to God, which had already been given to Him under so many titles.

But the way in which I, who have just had the great happiness to write this little abridgement of his life, would wish to describe his death is, that on the morning of October 31, 1617, when he had attained the age of eighty-six years, three months, and five days, and dating from that very moment, Alphonsus enjoyed the sight of God face to face, and was plunged into the ocean of His delights, this poor, this humble, this patient, this unknown porter in a house of the Society ; and that he enjoyed then the crown which now encircles his brow, and the glory wherewith he is robed in heaven, and the joy that inundates his soul ; and a faint reflection of all this was to be seen on earth in the transports of admiration that burst forth from the breast of the crowds who flocked round to gaze on this holy brother, as he lay extended on his bed of death. Marks of respect and veneration were heaped on his dead body, which could never have been ventured upon while he was living, and the large number of miracles

which commenced from that very moment, and which have been authenticated in the process for his beatification, prove that God was pleased to fulfil the promise which He made in those words—"He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

Already have two centuries and a half passed and God still proves their truth, and extraordinary graces accorded to the invocation of Blessed Alphonsus have never been interrupted. Pope Urban VIII. by a solemn decree directed that the cause of his beatification and canonization should be commenced. Leo XII. conferred on him the title of Blessed, and we have good hope that another Pope will canonize him as Saint. We must all pray that we may obtain this favour, but what is certain is that you can, if you choose, really, and from the bottom of your heart, while waiting for this day, contribute by your zeal, to the glory of Alphonsus, through the imitation of his virtues; for these virtues are your especial possession and property, seeing that he sanctified himself in your grade of lay-brother, and in your holy state of life. The graces requisite for reaching the same degree of perfection are not wanting to you. Make use of them and be assured that, through the Divine mercy, the reading of this *Little Abridgement of the Life of Alphonsus*, and this little treatise of the *Perfect Lay-brother*, ought to contribute much to it, and to your greater happiness. May it be so.

APPENDIX I.

FULLY persuaded that nothing which would promote the glory of their holy patron and model, could fail of pleasing our dear lay-brothers, and hoping at the same time that this simple little book may, to the great comfort of my heart, possess some interest and importance in their eyes, I shall here add, in the form of an Appendix or supplement, the Third Chapter of the First Volume of the Life of our great apostle and brother, Peter Claver, which was published at Madrid a short time before his beatification, having been translated from the Italian work of Father Longaro Oldi. This extract will explain how great a treasure Claver possessed in the most intimate friendship of Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, and that they may gain the full benefit of this friendship for themselves, I will add some of the admirable maxims of this good brother, begging them to receive them as though sent down to them by Alphonsus himself from heaven. The chapter from which we quote is thus headed :

His studies in philosophy at Majorca, his holy and spiritual friendship with Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, to whom God revealed the glory reserved for Father Claver in heaven.

In however great a spirit of indifference Father Claver held himself with regard to all the orders he

might receive from Superiors, he could not refrain, on this occasion, from manifesting the joy he felt on finding himself about to be sent to study philosophy at Majorca. Brother Alphonsus Rodriguez was at that time alive, and filled the office of porter in the college, all Spain knowing and speaking of his extraordinary sanctity. This is the Alphonsus, who in the humble state of lay-brother became a holy religious, possessing a wonderful spirit of mortification and penance, called to the most sublime contemplation and highest perfection in the practice of every virtue, favoured also with the rarest heavenly gifts and supernatural graces, with ecstasies, with the power to prophecy and of miracles. He also received the wonderful favour of the appearance to him of Jesus Christ, and of His holy Mother, and of angels; as is narrated in the history of his life, and in the authentic process instituted for his beatification.

In order not to lose so excellent an opportunity, the first thought and first care of Peter Claver on his arrival at Majorca was to ask general leave from his Superior to consult this holy religious on the spiritual concerns of his own soul, yet so as not to wound the deep humility of Alphonsus, nor run the risk of being opposed by him in his wish, God having already revealed to Claver that such was His divine will. The holy brother, however, received Claver, not as a disciple who had need of his lessons, but as a most tenderly affectionate friend, with whom he ought to share the immense treasures of grace which the hand of God had poured into his bosom, that thus they might mutually penetrate each other more and more

with the fire of the Divine love, like two burning coals placed side by side.

In this school of perfection, and under the instructions of such a master, Claver made wonderful progress, for he had in truth but to copy the holy example before his eyes, and to follow counsels so perfect.

He could never separate himself from the good brother, but day by day he watched him with feelings of love and respect, as a good son should study to imitate his father. "Ah! my dear brother Alphonsus," he often said to him, "how then shall I learn to love, truly love our Lord Jesus Christ? Tell me how! What shall I do in order to please Him? He gives me such ardent desires of giving myself up to Him without reserve, and yet I know not how to carry them out!" At these words, the holy old man in an ecstasy of joy would embrace him and press him to his heart, and would disclose to him all the treasures in his soul, from which he might supply himself at leisure and enrich his own spiritual life. And as each word from Alphonsus was like a spark of fire passing through the ears of Claver and lighting upon his heart, it enkindled more and more this Divine love in his soul. In order to preserve for ever at its burning heat so precious a flame, the young and fervent religious ran quickly to write out these holy words in a little note-book, which he kept by him with care to the time of his death.

The prayers of the great servant of God contributed no less to his advancement in the practice of all the religious virtues, and when Alphonsus saw the abun-

dant fruits produced in the soul of the young student by the heavenly gifts that were poured out upon it, he offered up still more fervent prayers to God that it might draw yet further profit from these gifts ; and that his prayer was heard God Himself assured him in the wonderful vision which I now describe. One day while his soul was transported in a heavenly ecstasy, he was conducted by his angel guardian to a spot whence he perceived an immense region of the sky all bathed in dazzling light, and beneath this ravishing picture, ranged in perfect order, were those treasures of glory described by St. John in the Apocalypse. On every throne was seated a royal personage, with the exception of one, the most beautiful and most royal of all, which was vacant. Full of desire to understand the mystery, Alphonsus heard a voice declaring to him that this singularly great glory was reserved for his much beloved disciple Peter Claver, in reward for all his virtues and for that multitude of souls which he would later on convert in India, at the cost of so much labour and fatigue. Immediately after these words the vision disappeared. Alphonsus with good reason did not at the time say anything about this vision to Claver, but he afterwards narrated all the circumstances to his confessor, through whom the knowledge of the event has been preserved to this day.

Alphonsus continued, on all exterior points, to treat his beloved friend with the same familiarity as before, yet from that day forward he began to look upon him with other eyes, and to show him a sort of religious veneration. They had long conversations together,

their pious colloquies on God and on holy subjects became more and more fervent, and they never parted from those spiritual conferences without Alphonsus, that he might second the designs of heaven, speaking to him of India, and of the immense need in which its unhappy people stood of evangelical labourers, repeating often that to a soul which loves God even imperfectly it should be an unendurable thought, that He was still unknown to so large a part of the world, simply because not one would go to tell of His Name. "Oh ! how many," he used to say with sighs, "how many Priests are there doing nothing in Europe, who might become actual apostles in America," and then he would add, shedding bitter tears, "Ah ! how great a misfortune ! how sad that the love of God has not power to draw hearts to cross over those wide oceans which the avarice of men makes no difficulty in traversing ! What ! is it that those souls have not been redeemed at the cost of the life of a God, has He not then died for them ? Ah ! Peter Claver, my beloved son, why will you not yourself go to gain fruit for the Blood of Jesus which has been shed ? He loves not, who does not know how to suffer, He waits for you there ; oh ! if you but knew how grand a treasure He has prepared for you there !"

Nothing more was needed to kindle the fire of zeal in the heart of Claver, already so earnestly disposed to light up that heavenly flame, and to do and suffer all for the glory of God ; and, therefore, with full determination drawn from these motives and the holy authority of him who spoke to his heart ; he wrote to his Superiors pressing them with the most

ardent entreaties to grant him leave to go out to these missions. At that period, however, he could not obtain more from his Superiors than an encouragement of hope for the future, he was told to continue his studies, and then, after concluding the course, proceed to Barcelona, where he would receive such directions as should appear to be most conformable to the designs of God and His greater glory. In fact, after finishing his philosophy, and after defending his thesis in public with as great modesty as learning, he received orders to betake himself to Barcelona. We can easily imagine how bitter a grief it was for him to leave the father of his soul, the holy and venerable Alphonsus, and with how great love and tenderness he must have embraced him for the last time.

But though externally separated by bodily absence, their hearts were as united as ever, and as regards Claver he maintained, at all times, so great a veneration and love for Alphonsus, in whom heaven had provided him with a spiritual director, that he could bring himself to speak of nothing else, the mere mention of his name was enough to throw him into a kind of transport and ecstasy.

He carefully preserved as a most valuable treasure, and carried about with him as long as he lived, a little book containing a short abridgement of the way of religious perfection, which Alphonsus had given to him, and which was in the handwriting of the blessed Saint. He consulted it to the day of his death; it was as an oracle for him in all his doubts, a consolation in suffering, support under fatigue, nay,

a means he often made use of for working surprising miracles.

When he had reached the last years of his life, and when, already paralyzed, he was approaching his end, he was told that a life of his dear Brother Alphonsus containing a portrait had just been published. He immediately cried out with joy: "May God be praised! This is what I have so long desired. Oh! now I can die content." He begged that the book might be read to him, and more than once, even when he was, so to speak, in the act of dying, and the person who tended him in his sickness, seeing his extreme weakness, had removed the book from him without his perceiving it, he raised himself up in bed with much pain and difficulty, dressed himself as best he could and left his room to get it again, not bearing to be deprived of this spiritual help at the moment in which he had especial need of it.

Lessons or Maxims given to Father Claver by Brother Alphonsus, already mentioned in this Appendix.

1. The salvation and perfection of the soul consists in doing the will of our Lord, and we should always, at every moment of our life, in every matter, keep this Divine will before our eyes in order to execute it with very great fidelity; and the more one conforms to this rule, the more perfect will he become.

2. To do the will of God, we must learn to despise our own will in everything. For the more we die to self, the more we live to God; and in proportion as a man despoils himself of self, and of self-love, so much the more will he be filled with the love of God.

Before a person can do the will of God he must learn to love Him, and the degree of this love can be measured by the more or less perfect fulfilment of this Divine will.

3. To love God we must first give up self-will, and purify our wills entirely from all earthly love and carnal affection; we must love God alone, or if any other object be loved, it must be for the sake of God and with no other motive.

4. The highest perfection of all consists in directing every thought, word, and action, solely to the greater glory of God. We must labour with a very earnest desire to bring our wills in every particular into conformity with the will of God, and into such perfect accord with His; that not only does our will not desire what is evil, but not even what is good if God does not will it, and that it is not opposed to Him in one single thing either of temporal or spiritual concern. We must also use every effort to prevent anything from troubling the peace of our soul, by wishing only what God wills and appoints, and bestows with His own hand.

5. In order to will only that which God wills, it is absolutely necessary to renounce our own will, and that constantly; by renouncing our own we perform the will of God, we do that which is most pleasing to Him, we are one with Him.

6. The perfection of the religious life does not consist in remaining shut up in a cloister, but in practising the virtues belonging to that state.

7. To make good advance it is requisite to be silent under injuries, reproaches, and bad treatment, whether

they come from our own fault or not, without allowing the thoughts to recur to self; and when we are attacked, we should submit to be conquered, and remain silent.

8. Would you make progress, watch over your tongue, and do not by speaking lose the gain you have made by being silent; silence is a safe guardian of most precious gifts in the soul. Strive that your words shall always bear the marks of peace, tranquillity, truth, and of edification to your neighbour; speak but little, and in few words, and these sound, and concerning the things of God.

9. If you desire to profit much and speak well, speak always of God and for God, living humbly with Him alone.

10. Never refuse to do all that obedience shall appoint for you, nor to obey any person whatever, even if he be not your Superior, submitting yourself to all for the sake of God and doing for them with readiness all that you can. If there is anything that you have not been able to do, when asked why you have not done it, give the simple answer: I was not able; whatever you might say more than this were best left unsaid. Having said this much remain silent, add nothing more, absolutely nothing; whatever you may say in your own mind. Be silent, be silent, be silent! say not a single word; great sanctity lies in the observance of this, also true perfection, and very rapid progress; for this is to conquer oneself, and through the love of God to refuse to dwell on self, but to submit oneself the rather to everything which is neither against God, nor against obedience.

11. To try to know oneself, this is the foundation of everything. He who knows himself, despises himself; while he who does not know himself is puffed up.

12. Speak little with men, and much with God.

13. He who has found out a little corner of refuge, will find there much devotion.

14. A good religious ought to be, like Melchisedech, without father, without mother, without family; because he should be no more with them, than as if he had no relations.

15. You should be in the world alone with God alone. He alone is all for you.

16. See God in every man, and treat every one as God's image.

17. Pray to God for those who have caused you any trouble, and render more good to them than they have done harm to you.

18. Give to God the first-fruits of the day, by offering to Him your heart and all that which you are about to do that day.

19. Offer up your actions to God at the commencement of each day, at its middle, and at its close; at its commencement by directing your intention to His greater glory, at mid-day by uniting your actions to those of Jesus Christ that you may acquire merit, and at the end of the day to secure your own salvation and that of your neighbour.

20. Have God ever present in your heart; neither do nor say anything without asking and obtaining His permission.

21. Retire every day into the recess of your heart

in order to find God there and to obtain His grace, that you may serve Him, and avoid everything that would offend Him.

22. Never leave your room without cause, ask permission from God to leave it, and grace not to sin against Him; and on returning examine yourself a little, to see whether you return no worse than you left.

23. Before leaving the house, pay a short visit to your Lord in the chapel, ask Him to accompany you and to be always present by your side.

24. Do not make use of your senses except for necessary observation and for rendering service to God; do not look curiously at any peculiar object; nor listen to useless news which dries up the spirit.

25. Never speak of food nor of dress, nor ask for anything to make your room more comfortable, but look upon yourself as dead to the world, in order that you may live to God alone.

26. Do not partake of sweet or richly dressed dishes, for none of these are necessary for the preservation of life. He who loves delicacies for his body loses delicacies for the soul; and he who regales himself amongst men will have no pleasure in the heavenly banquet.

27. Look on praises as so many injuries, not wishing to have anything except what is true in the eyes of God. Men see only the outside, but God's eye penetrates to the heart.

28. Rejoice in the midst of contempt, and call to mind the outrages which Christ your Lord suffered for you. Humble yourself under affronts, because you have deserved still more of these for your sins.

29. Meditate constantly on the great truths, especially on death, for which you must soon prepare yourself; and inure your soul to labour and suffering, because ere long you will have no more time for meriting.

30. Make your meditation frequently on the Passion of Jesus Christ; hourly remind yourself of all that He has suffered for you, thank Him without ceasing, ask Him to give you His Cross, and bear it cheerfully through love of Him.

31. Meditate upon the virtues, especially those which belong to your religious state. Consider how grand these are, how sublime, each one in itself, and then when taken together; how difficult obedience sometimes is, and what sacrifices it may require of you, and allow no peace to your heart till it has resolved to make every sacrifice with joy for the love of God.

32. Speak well of every one, and ill only of yourself.

33. Reprehend and punish yourself for the faults into which you have fallen, ask pardon of God, and pray Him to stretch out His hand and keep you from falling into them again.

34. Avoid the occasions which have betrayed you into fault even once, or into the danger of it. These are the snares of the evil one; you must resist and defeat him.

35. Serve Holy Mass as often as you can, remembering that the angels are there before the altar, and are adoring the God who immolates Himself. Behold Him on the altar as upon the Cross on Calvary, and, along with the Priest, offer up this Divine Victim to His Eternal Father.

36. Detach your heart from all creatures, and give it entire to God. Make constant acts of love in the course of the day, feeding continually that sacred fire which burns in the sanctuary of your heart.

37. Be very devout to the Blessed Virgin, love her, serve her with your whole heart, pay frequent visits to her every day ; offer to her all your actions, recite your beads and her Little Office too, if you have the time ; lose no occasion of performing some action which may please her ; contemplate her virtues, and spur yourself on to imitate them with the grace of God.

38. Practise great devotion also to your guardian angel, and to St. Ignatius our father ; love him as a child should do, respect him as your father, and make choice of both these as intercessors to help you to obtain that which you ask of God.

39. Honour the statues of the Saints as though they themselves were before you, bear in mind the virtues which they practised in the service of God, reflect how rapidly has passed the period of their trial, and how great a recompense they now possess ; meditate on the shortness of this life, on the eternal duration of the next, and all will appear to you sweet and easy to suffer for the love of God.

40. Watch much, sleep little. All that one takes from sleep is so much gained for the life and the merits that are eternal.

41. Study with care to have only what is necessary and nothing more. Suitable knowledge profits, superfluous science begets vanity, or passes away.

42. Seek God in everything, and you will find Him : He will always be near you.

APPENDIX II.

*Catalogue of the Lay-brothers of the Society of
Jesus, who have been raised to our altars
by the Holy Church.*

SOLEMNLY CANONIZED.

February 5. St. James Chisai, Japanese. He was a beautiful and perfect writer. He spent the greater part of his life in the office of porter, and was charged with the accommodation and service of those who came to the house, whether they belonged to the Society or were strangers.

DECLARED BLESSED.

September 11. Blessed Ambrose Fernandez, born at Sisto, in the diocese of Oporto. He died in prison, in which he was confined, along with Father Spinola, in consequence of making open profession of his faith.

October 30. Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez.

BLESSED MARTYRS OF JAPAN.

March 5. Blessed Denis Fugixima.

March 14. Blessed Leonard Chimura. Although from his studies he might have claimed to be ordained Priest, he preferred the degree of lay-brother.

June 20. Blessed Gaspar Sandamatzu, socius and amanuensis of Father Provincial.

September 7. Blessed Michael Nacaxima.

October 12. Blessed Augustine Ota, who was received into the Society and made his vows on the eve of his glorious martyrdom.

BLESSED BROTHER MARTYRS.

It is not certain that all these were lay-brothers ; for some of them, being novices, might perhaps have been intended for the priesthood after their noviceship and studies.

March 5. Blessed Peter Onizuchi.

June 20. Blessed Brothers Michael Toxo, Peter Rinxei, John Quisacu, Paul Scinsuque, Vincent Caun, a Corean.

September 11. Blessed Brothers Thomas Acafoxi, Peter Sampo, Louis Cavarro, Gonsalvo Fusai, Antonio Quiuni, Michael Xumpto, John Ciungozu were martyred along with Father Charles Spinola, being all of ripe age. They entered into prison either novices of the Society already, or hoping to become so, as may be read in the Lessons of their Office, where, without distinction of name, they are simply called students.

December 5. Blessed Simon Jempo.

BLESSED BROTHERS MARTYRED ALONG WITH FATHER
AZEVEDO.

July 15. Azevedo had as companions in his martyrdom two priests, twelve approved scholastics, fifteen approved lay-brothers, and one coadjutor novice.

Blessed Simon Acosta, native of Oporto, who, having been admitted as a scholastic and not being able to go on from bad health, asked and obtained leave to be received as a lay-brother.

BB. approved lay-brothers, Manuel Alvarez, of Evora ; Francis Alvarez, of Corvillan ; Dominic Fernandez, of Villaviciosa ; Gaspar Alvarez, of Oporto ; Amaro Vaz, of Oporto ; Blase Rivera, of Brague ; John Fernandez, of Brague ; John de Baeza, Spaniard ; John de Mazorga, of Saint Jean of Piedde-Port, who was a painter, and entered the Society in the province of Aragon ; Antonio Fernandez, of Monte-Mayor, who was a joiner ; Peter Fontaura, of Brague ; John de Zafra, of Toledo ; Alphonso de Vaena, who, born at Cordova, entered the Society in the province of Toledo ; a goldsmith by trade, he filled the offices of refectorian and infirmarian in the College of Madrid. In the same province of Toledo, Blessed Stephen Zudayre joined the Society ; he was a tailor and filled the office of room-keeper at Villarejo de Fuentes and at Madrid ; while at Cuenca he was cook and kept the linen-room at the same time ; he was born at Zudayre, within the diocese of Pampeluna in Navarre. Blessed Gregory Escribano, native of Viguera, three leagues from Logrono, belonged to the Province of Castile.







A Select Catalogue of Books

PUBLISHED BY

BURNS, OATES, & CO.,

17 & 18, PORTMAN STREET,

AND

63, PATERNOSTER ROW.



BOOKS LATELY PUBLISHED

BY MESSRS.

BURNS, OATES, & CO.,

17 & 18, Portman Street, and 63, Paternoster Row.



Memorials of those who Suffered for the
Faith in Ireland in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth,
and Eighteenth Centuries. Collected from Au-
thentic and Original Documents by MYLES
O'REILLY, B.A., LL.D. 8vo, 7s. 6d.

"A very valuable compendium of the martyrology of Ireland during the three, or rather two, centuries of active Protestant persecution. The language of many of these original records, written often by a friend or relative of the martyr, is inexpressibly touching, often quite heroic in its tone."—*Dublin Review*.

"Very interesting memories."—*Month*.



Life of St. Thomas of Canterbury. By
Mrs. HOPE, Author of "The Early Martyrs"
Cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

A valuable addition to the collection of historical books for Catholic readers. It contains a large collection of interesting facts, gleaned with great

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 17, PORTMAN STREET, W.

industry from the various existing Lives of St. Thomas, and other documents.

"Compiled with great care from the best authors."—*Month*.

"The rich covers of this splendidly-bound volume do not, as is often the case, envelop matter unworthy of its fair exterior. This is a volume which will be found useful as a present, whether in the college or school, for either sex."—*Weekly Register*.

"An agreeable and useful volume."—*Nation*.

"A more complete collection of incidents and anecdotes, combined with events of greater weight, could not be compressed into so compact, yet perfectly roomy, a space."—*Tablet*.

By the same Author.

Life of St. Philip Neri. New Edition.
2s. 6d.; cheap edition, 2s.

NARRATIVE OF MISSIONS.

The Corean Martyrs. By Canon SHORT-
LAND. Cloth, 2s.

A narrative of Missions and Martyrdoms too little known in this country.

"This is a notice of the martyrs who have fallen in this most interesting mission, and of the history of its rise and progress up to the present day."—*Tablet*.

"No one can read this interesting volume without the most genuine admiration of, and sympathy with, such zeal and constancy."—*Literary Churchman*.

MISSIONARY BIOGRAPHY.

I. *Life of Henri Dorié, Martyr.* Trans-
lated by Lady HERBERT. 1s. 6d.; cloth, 2s.

"The circulation of such lives as this of Henry Dorie will do much to promote a spirit of zeal, and to move hearts hitherto

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 63, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

stagnant because they have not been stirred to the generous deeds which characterise Catholic virtues."—*Tablet*.

2. *Théophane Vénard, Martyr in Tonquin.*

Edited by the Same. 2s. ; cloth elegant, 3s.

"The life of this martyr is not so much a biography as a series of letters translated by Lady Herbert, in which the life of Théophane Vénard unfolds itself by degrees, and in the most natural and interesting way. His disposition was affectionate, and formed for ardent friendship; hence, his correspondence is full of warmth and tenderness, and his love of his sister in particular is exemplary and striking. During ten years he laboured under Mgr. Retord, in the western district of Tonquin, and his efforts for the conversion of souls were crowned with singular success. During the episcopate of his Bishop no less than 40,000 souls were added to the flock of Christ, and Vénard was peculiarly instrumental in gathering in this harvest."—*Northern Press*.

"We cannot take leave of this little volume without an acknowledgment to Lady Herbert for the excellent English dress in which she has presented it to the British public; certainly, no lives are more calculated to inspire vocation to the noble work of the apostolic life than those of Dorie and Vénard."—*Tablet*.

3. *Life of Bishop Bruté.* Edited by the Same.

The Martyrdom of St. Cecilia: a Drama.

By ALBANY J. CHRISTIE, S.J. With a Frontispiece after Molitor. Elegant cloth, 5s.

"Well-known and beautiful drama."—*Tablet*.

"The receipt of the fourth edition of this beautiful play assures us that our own opinion of its merits has been shared by a wide circle of the Catholic public. The binding is exquisite, and the picture of St. Cecilia is a work of art."—*Weekly Register*

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 17, PORTMAN STREET, W.

The Life of M. Olier, Founder of the Seminary of St. Sulpice; with Notices of his most Eminent Contemporaries. By EDWARD HEALY THOMPSON, M.A. Cloth, 4s.

This Biography has received the special approbation of the Abbé Faillon, Author of "La Vie de M. Olier;" and of the Very Reverend Paul Dubreul, D.D., Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Baltimore, U.S.

Edited by the Same.

The Life of St. Charles Borromeo. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

Also, lately published, by Mr. THOMPSON.

The Hidden Life of Jesus: a Lesson and Model to Christians. Translated from the French of BOUDON. Cloth, 3s.

"This profound and valuable work has been very carefully and ably translated by Mr. Thompson. We shall be glad to receive more of that gentleman's publications, for good translation, whether from the French or any other language, is not too common amongst us. The publication is got up with the taste always displayed by the firm of Burns, Oates, and Co."—*Register*.

"The more we have of such works as 'The Hidden Life of Jesus,' the better."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"A book of searching power."—*Church Review*.

"We have often regretted that this writer's works are not better known."—*Universe*.

"We earnestly recommend its study and practice to all readers."—*Tablet*.

"We have to thank Mr. Thompson for this translation of a valuable work which has long been popular in France."—*Dublin Review*.

"A good translation."—*Month*.

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 63, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

Devotion to the Nine Choirs of Holy Angels,
and especially to the Angel Guardians. Trans-
lated from the Same. 3s.

"We congratulate Mr. Thompson on the way in which he has accomplished his task, and we earnestly hope that an increased devotion to the Holy Angels may be the reward of his labour of love."—*Tablet*.

"A beautiful translation."—*The Month*.

"The translation is extremely well done."—*Weekly Register*.

Library of Religious Biography. Edited by
EDWARD HEALY THOMPSON.

VOL. 1. THE LIFE OF ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA, S.J. 5s.

"We gladly hail the first instalment of Mr. Healy Thompson's Library of Religious Biography. The life before us brings out strongly a characteristic of the Saint which is, perhaps, little appreciated by many who have been attracted to him chiefly by the purity and early holiness which have made him the chosen patron of the young. This characteristic is his intense energy of will, which reminds us of another Saint, of a very different vocation and destiny, whom he is said to have resembled also in personal appearance—the great St. Charles Borromeo."—*Dublin Review*.

"The book before us contains numberless traces of a thoughtful and tender devotion to the Saint. It shows a loving penetration into his spirit, and an appreciation of the secret motives of his action, which can only be the result of a deeply affectionate study of his life and character."—*Month*.

VOL. 2. THE LIFE OF MARIE EUSTELLE HARPAIN ;
or, the Angel of the Eucharist. 5s.

"The life of Marie Eustelle Harpain possesses a special value and interest apart from its extraordinary natural and supernatural beauty, from the fact that to her example and to the effect of her writings is attributed in great measure the wonderful revival of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in France, and consequently throughout Western Christendom."—*Dublin Review*.

"A more complete instance of that life of purity and close union with God in the world of which we have just been speak-

ing is to be found in the history of Marie Eustelle Harpain, the sempstress of Saint-Pallais. The writer of the present volume has had the advantage of very copious materials in the French works on which his own work is founded, and Mr. Thompson has discharged his office as editor with his usual diligence and accuracy."—*The Month*.

Vol. 3. THE LIFE OF ST. STANISLAS KOSTKA. 5s.

"We strongly recommend this biography to our readers, earnestly hoping that the writer's object may thereby be attained in an increase of affectionate veneration for one of whom Urban VIII. exclaimed that, although 'a little youth,' he was indeed 'a great saint.'"—*Tablet*.

"There has been no adequate biography of St. Stanislas. In rectifying this want, Mr. Thompson has earned a title to the gratitude of English-speaking Catholics. The engaging Saint of Poland will now be better known among us, and we need not fear that, better known, he will not be better loved."—*Weekly Register*.

The Life of S. Teresa, written by herself:
a new Translation from the last Spanish Edition.
To which is added for the first time in English
THE RELATIONS, or the Manifestations of her
Spiritual State which the Saint submitted to her
Confessors. Translated by DAVID LEWIS. In
a handsome volume, 8vo, cloth, 10s. 6d.

"The work is incomparable; and Mr. Lewis's rare faithfulness and felicity as a translator are known so well, that no word of ours can be necessary to make the volume eagerly looked for."—*Dublin Review*.

"We have in this grand book perhaps the most copious spiritual autobiography of a Saint, and of a highly-favoured Saint, that exists."—*Month*.

The Life of Margaret Mary Alacoque. By
the Rev. F. TICKELL, S.J. 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d.

"It is long since we have had such a pleasure as the reading of Father Tickell's book has afforded us. No incident of her holy life from

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 63, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

birth to death seems to be wanting, and the volume appropriately closes with an account of her beatification."—*Weekly Register*.

"It is one of those high-class spiritual biographies which will be best appreciated in religious communities."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"Of Father Tickell's labours we can say with pleasure that he has given us a real biography, in which the Saint is everything, and the biographer keeps in the background."—*Dublin Review*.

"We can only hope that the life may carry on, as it is worthy of doing, the apostolate begun in our country by one who our Lord desires should be 'as a brother to His servant, sharing equally in these spiritual goods, united with her to His own Heart for ever.'"—*Tablet*.

"The work could hardly have been done in a more unpretending, and at the same time more satisfactory, manner than in the volume now before us."—*Month*.

• *The Day Hours of the Church.* Latin and English. Cloth, 1s.

Also, separately,

THE OFFICES OF PRIME AND COMPLINE. 8d.

THE OFFICES OF TIERCE, SEXT, AND NONE. 3d.

"Prime and Compline are the morning and evening prayers which the Church has drawn up for her children; and, for our part, we can wish for nothing better. We know not where an improvement could be suggested, and therefore we see not why anything should have been substituted for them. . . . Why should not their use be restored? Why should they not become the standard devotions of all Catholics, whether alone or in their families? Why may we not hope to have them more solemnly performed—chanted even every day in all religious communities; or, where there is a sufficient number of persons, even in family chapels?"—*Cardinal Wiseman*.

"These beautiful little books, which have received the imprimatur of his Grace the Archbishop, are a zealous priest's answers to the most eminent Cardinal's questions—such answers as would have gladdened his heart could they have been given when first demanded. But the Cardinal lives in his successors

and what he so greatly desired should be done is in progress of full performance."—*Tablet*.

"The publication of these Offices is another proof of what we have before alluded to, viz., the increased liturgical taste of the present day."—*Catholic Opinion*

POPULAR DEVOTION.

Now ready.

Devotions for the Ecclesiastical Seasons, consisting of Psalms, Hymns, Prayers, &c., suited for Evening Services, and arranged for Singing. Cloth, 1s. Also in separate Nos. at 2d. each, for distribution, as follows:—

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Advent and Christmas. | 4. Whitsuntide. |
| 2. Septuagesima to Easter. | 5. Sundays after Pentecost. |
| 3. Paschal Time. | 6. Feasts of our Lady. |
| 7. Saints' Days. | |

Music for the whole, 1s. 6d.

"A valuable addition to our stock of popular devotions."—*Dublin Review*.

Church Music and Church Choirs: 1. The Music to be Sung; 2. The proper Singers; 3. The Place for the Choir. 2s.

"The special value of this pamphlet, and the seasonableness of its circulation, lie in this: that it attempts to solve—and, we believe, does really solve—several important points as to the proper kinds of music to be used in our public Offices, and more especially at High Mass."—*Tablet*.

"We earnestly recommend all who can do so to procure and study this pamphlet."—*Weekly Register*.

"Masterly and exhaustive articles."—*Catholic Opinion*.

BURNS, OATES, & CO, 63, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

Liturgical Directions for Organists, Singers, and Composers. Contains the Instructions of the Holy See on the proper kind of Music for the Church, from the Council of Trent to the present time; and thus furnishes choirs with a guide for selection. Fcp. 8vo, 6d.

New Meditations for each Day in the Year on the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ. By a Father of the Society of Jesus. With the imprimatur of his Grace the Archbishop of Westminster. Second Edition. Vols. I. and II., price 4s. 6d. each; or complete in two vols., 9s.

"We can heartily recommend this book for its style and substance; it bears with it several strong recommendations. . . . It is solid and practical without being dreary or commonplace." *Westminster Gazette*.

"A work of great practical utility, and we give it our earnest recommendation."—*Weekly Register*.

The Day Sanctified: being Meditations and Spiritual Readings for Daily Use. Selected from the Works of Saints and approved writers of the Catholic Church. Fcp., cloth, 3s. 6d.; red edges, 4s.

"Of the many volumes of meditation on sacred subjects which have appeared in the last few years, none has seemed to us so well adapted to its object as the one before us."—*Tablet*.

"Deserves to be specially mentioned."—*Month*.

"Admirable in every sense."—*Church Times*.

"Many of the Meditations are of great beauty. . . . They form, in fact, excellent little sermons, and we have no doubt will be largely used as such."—*Literary Churchman*.

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 17, PORTMAN STREET, W.

Our Father: Popular Discourses on the Lord's Prayer. By Dr. EMANUEL VEITH, Preacher in Ordinary in the Cathedral of Vienna. (Dr. V. is one of the most eminent preachers on the Continent.) Cloth, 3s. 6d.

"We can heartily recommend these as accurate, devotional, and practical."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"We are happy to receive and look over once more this beautiful work on the Lord's Prayer—most profitable reading."—*Weekly Register*.

"Most excellent manual."—*Church Review*.

Little Book of the Love of God. By Count STOLBERG. With Life of the Author. Cloth, 2s.

"An admirable little treatise, perfectly adapted to our language and modes of thought."—*Bishop of Birmingham*.

NEW BOOK FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

Reflections and Prayers for Holy Communion.

Translated from the French. Uniform with "Imitation of the Sacred Heart." With Preface by Archbishop MANNING. Fcp. 8vo, cloth, 4s. 6d.; bound, red edges, 5s.; calf, 8s. 6d.; morocco, 9s. 6d.

"The Archbishop has marked his approval of the work by writing a preface for it, and describes it as 'a valuable addition to our books of devotion.' We may mention that it contains 'two very beautiful methods of hearing Mass,' to use the words of the Archbishop in the Preface."—*Register*.

"A book rich with the choicest and most profound Catholic devotions."—*Church Review*.

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 63, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

Holy Confidence. By FATHER ROGACCI, of the Society of Jesus. One vol. 18mo, cloth, 2s.

"As an attack on the great enemy, despair, no work could be more effective; while it adds another to a stock of books of devotion which is likely to be much prized."—*Weekly Register*.

"This little book, addressed to those 'who strive to draw nearer to God and to unite themselves more closely with Him,' is one of the most useful and comforting that we have read for a long time. We earnestly commend this little book to all troubled souls, feeling sure that they will find in it abundant cause for joy and consolation."—*Tablet*.

The Invitation Heeded: Reasons for a Return to Catholic Unity. By JAMES KENT STONE, late President of Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, and of Hobart College. Cloth, 5s. 6d.

"A very important contribution to our polemical literature, which can hardly fail to be a standard work on the Anglican controversy."—*Dr. Brownson in the New York Tablet*.

* * * Of this able work 3000 have already been sold in America.

The New Testament Narrative, in the Words of the Sacred Writers. With Notes, Chronological Tables, and Maps. A book for those who, as a matter of education or of devotion, wish to be thoroughly well acquainted with the Life of our Lord. What is narrated by each of His Evangelists is woven into a continuous and chronological narrative. Thus the study of the Gospels is complete and yet easy. Cloth, 2s.

"The compilers deserve great praise for the manner in which they have performed their task. We commend this little volume as well and carefully printed, and as furnishing its readers, more—

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 17, PORTMAN STREET, W.

over, with a great amount of useful information in the tables inserted at the end."—*Month*.

"It is at once clear, complete, and beautiful."—*Catholic Opinion*

Balmes: Protestantism and Catholicism
compared in their Effects upon European Civilisation. Cloth, 7s. 6d.

*** A new edition of this far-famed Treatise.

The See of St. Peter. By T. W. ALLIES.
A new and improved edition, with Preface on the present State of the Controversy. 4s. 6d.

Lallemant's Doctrine of the Spiritual Life.
Edited by Dr. FABER. New Edition. Cloth, 4s. 6d.

"This excellent work has a twofold value, being both a biography and a volume of meditations. Father Lallemant's life does not abound with events, but its interest lies chiefly in the fact that his world and his warfare were within. His 'Spiritual Doctrine' contains an elaborate analysis of the wants, dangers, trials, and aspirations of the inner man, and supplies to the thoughtful and devout reader the most valuable instructions for the attainment of heavenly wisdom, grace, and strength."—*Catholic Times*.

"A treatise of the very highest value."—*Month*.

"The treatise is preceded by a short account of the writer's life, and has had the wonderful advantage of being edited by the late Father Faber."—*Weekly Register*.

"One of the very best of Messrs. Burns and Co.'s publications is this new edition of F. Lallemant's 'Spiritual Doctrine.'"—*Westminster Gazette*.

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 63, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

The Rivers of Damascus and Jordan: a
 Causerie. By a Tertiary of the Order of St.
 Dominick. 4s.

"Good solid reading."—*Month*.

"Well done, and in a truly charitable spirit."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"It treats the subject in so novel and forcible a light, that we are fascinated in spite of ourselves, and irresistibly led on to follow its arguments and rejoice at its conclusions."—*Tablet*.

Eudoxia: a Tale of the Fifth Century.
 From the German of IDA, COUNTESS HAHN-
 HAHN. Cloth elegant, 4s.

"This charming tale may be classed among such instructive as well as entertaining works as 'Fabiola' and 'Callista.' It adds another laurel to the brow of the fair Countess."—*Weekly Register*.

"Instructive and interesting book."—*Northern Press*.

Tales for the Many. By CYRIL AUSTIN.
 In Five Numbers, at 2d. each; also, cloth, 1s.;
 gilt edges, 1s. 6d.

"Calculated to do good in our lending-libraries."—*Tablet*.

"We wish the volume all the success it deserves, and shall always welcome with pleasure any effort from the same quarter."—*Weekly Register*.

"One of the most delightful books which Messrs. Burns and Oates have brought out to charm children at this festive season."—*Catholic Opinion*.

In the Snow; or, Tales of Mount St.
 Bernard. By the Rev Dr. ANDERDON. Cloth
 neat, 3s. 6d.

"A collection of pretty stories."—*Star*.

"An excellent book for a present."—*Universe*.

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 17, PORTMAN STREET, W.

"A capital book of stories."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"An agreeable book."—*Church Review*.

"An admirable fireside companion."—*Nation*.

"A very interesting volume of tales."—*Freeman*.

"Several successive stories are related by different people assembled together, and thus a greater scope is given for variety, not only of the matter, but also the tone of each story, according to the temper and position of the narrators. Beautifully printed, tastefully bound, and reflects great credit on the publishers."

"A pleasing contribution."—*Month*.

"A charming volume. We congratulate Catholic parents and children on the appearance of a book which may be given by the former with advantage, and read by the latter with pleasure and edification."—*Dublin Review*.

By the same Author.

*The Seven Ages of Clarewell: A History of
a Spot of Ground.* Cloth, 3s.

"We have an attractive work from the pen of an author who knows how to combine a pleasing and lively style with the promotion of the highest principles and the loftiest aims. The volume before us is beautifully bound, in a similar way to 'In the Snow,' by the same author, and is therefore very suitable for a present."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"A pleasing novelty in the style and character of the book, which is well and clearly sustained in the manner it is carried out."—*Northern Press*.

"Each stage furnishes the material for a dramatic scene; are very well hit off, and the whole makes up a graphic picture."—*Month*.

"'Clarewell' will give not only an hour of pleasant reading, but will, from the nature of the subject, be eminently suggestive of deep and important truths."—*Tablet*.

WORKS BY LADY GEORGINA FULLERTON.

*Life of Mary Fitzgerald, a Child of the
Sacred Heart.* Price 1s.; cloth extra, 2s.

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 63, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

WORKS BY LADY GEORGINA FULLERTON (continued).

Rose Leblanc. A Tale of great interest.
Cloth, 3s.

Grantley Manor. (The well-known and favourite Novel). Cloth, 3s.; cheap edition, 2s. 6d.

Life of St. Frances of Rome. Neat cloth, 2s. 6d.; cheap edition, 1s. 8d.

Edited by the Same.

Our Lady's Little Books. Neat cloth, 2s.; separate Numbers, 4d. each.

Life of the Honourable E. Dormer, late of the 60th Rifles. 1s.; cloth extra, 2s.

Helpers of the Holy Souls. 6d.

Tales from the Diary of a Sister of Mercy.

By C. M. BRAME.

CONTENTS: The Double Marriage—The Cross and the Crown—The Novice—The Fatal Accident—The Priest's Death—The Gambler's Wife—The Apostate—The Besetting Sin.

Beautifully bound in bevelled cloth, 3s. 6d.

"Written in a chaste, simple, and touching style."—*Tablet.*

"This book is a casket; and those who open it will find the gem within."—*Register.*

"Calculated to promote the spread of virtue, and to check that of vice; and cannot fail to have a good effect upon all—young and old—into whose hands it may fall."—*Nation.*

"A neat volume, composed of agreeable and instructive tales."

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 17, PORTMAN STREET, W.

Each of its tales concludes with a moral, which supplies food for reflection."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"They are well and cleverly told, and the volume is neatly got up."—*Month*.

"Very well told; all full of religious allusions and expressions."—*Star*.

"Very well written, and life-like—many very pathetic."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"An excellent work; reminds us forcibly of Father Price's 'Sick Calls.'"—*Universe*.

"A very interesting series of tales."—*Sun*.

By the Same.

Angels' Visits: A Series of Tales. With Frontispiece and Vignette. 3s. 6d.

"The tone of the book is excellent, and it will certainly make itself a great favourite with the young."—*Month*.

"Beautiful collection of Angel Stories. All who may wish to give any dear children a book which speaks in tones suited to the sweet simplicity of their innocent young hearts about holy things cannot do better than send for 'Angels' Visits.'"—*Weekly Register*.

"One of the prettiest books for children we have seen."—*Tablet*.

"A book which excites more than ordinary praise. We have great satisfaction in recommending to parents and all who have the charge of children this charming volume."—*Northern Press*.

"A good present for children. An improvement on the 'Diary of a Sister of Mercy.'"—*Universe*.

"Touchingly written, and evidently the emanation of a refined and pious mind."—*Church Times*.

"A charming little book, full of beautiful stories of the family of angels."—*Church Opinion*.

"A nicely-written volume."—*Bookseller*.

"Gracefully-written stories."—*Star*.

Just out, ornamental cloth, 5s.

Legends of Our Lady and the Saints: or, Our Children's Book of Stories in Verse. Written

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 63, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

for the Recitations of the Pupils of the Schools of the Holy Child Jesus, St. Leonards-on-Sea. Cheap Edition, 2s. 6d.

"It is a beautiful religious idea that is realised in the 'Legends of Our Lady and the Saints.' We are bound to add that it has been successfully carried out by the good nuns of St. Leonards. The children of their Schools are unusually favoured in having so much genius and taste exerted for their instruction and delight. The book is very daintily decorated and bound, and forms a charming present for pious children."—*Tablet*.

"The 'Legends' are so beautiful, that they ought to be read by all lovers of poetry."—*Bookseller*.

"Graceful poems."—*Month*.

Edith Sydney: a Tale of the Catholic Movement. By MISS OXENHAM. 5s.

"A novel for the novel-reader, and at the same time it is a guide to the convert and a help to their instructors."—*Universe*.

"Miss Oxenham shows herself to be a fair writer of a controversial tale, as well as a clever delineator of character."—*Tablet*.

"A charming romance. We introduce 'Edith Sydney' to our readers, confident that she will be a safe and welcome visitor in many a domestic circle, and will attain high favour with the Catholic reading public."—*Nation*.

"Miss Oxenham seems to possess considerable powers for the delineation of character and incident."—*Month*.

Not Yet: a Tale of the Present Time. By MISS OXENHAM. 5s.

"The lighter order of Catholic literature receives a very welcome addition in this story, which is original and very striking. The author is mistress of a style which is light and pleasant. The work is one to which we can give our heartiest commendation."—*Cork Examiner*.

"We are indebted to Miss Oxenham for one of the most in-

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 17, PORTMAN STREET, W.

teresting sensational Catholic tales yet published."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"Wholesome and pleasant reading, evincing a refined and cultivated understanding."—*Union Review*.

"Miss Oxenham's work would rank well even among Mudie's novels, although its one-volume form is likely to be unfavourable in the eyes of ordinary novel-readers; but, in nine cases out of ten, a novelette is more effective than a regular novel, and any more padding would have merely diluted the vivid and unflagging interest which the authoress of 'Not Yet' has imparted to her elegantly-bound volume. The plot is as original as a plot can be; it is well laid and carefully and ably worked out."—*Westminster Gazette*.

Nellie Netterville: a Tale of Ireland in the Time of Cromwell. By CECILIA CADDELL, Author of "Wild Times." 5s.; cheap edition, 3s. 6d.

"A very interesting story. The author's style is pleasing, picturesque, and good, and we recommend our readers to obtain the book for themselves."—*Church News*.

"A tale well told and of great interest."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"Pretty pathetic story—well told."—*Star*.

"Pretty book-history of cruelties inflicted by Protestant domination in the sister country—full of stirring and affecting passages."—*Church Review*.

"Tale is well told, and many of the incidents, especially the burning of the chapel with the priest and congregation by the Cromwellian soldiers, are intensely interesting."—*Universe*.

"By a writer well known, whose reputation will certainly not suffer by her new production."—*Month*.

Marie; or, the Workwoman of Liège. By CECILIA CADDELL. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

"This is another of those valuable works like that of 'Marie Eustelle Harpain.' Time would fail us were we to enumerate

BURNS, OATES, & CO., 63, PATERNOTER ROW, E.C.

either her marvellous acts of charity, or the heroic sufferings she endured for the sake of others, or the wonderful revelations with which her faith and charity were rewarded."—*Tablet*.

"The author of 'Wild Times,' and other favourite works, is to be congratulated on the issue of a volume which is of more service than any book of fiction, however stirring. It is a beautiful work—beautiful in its theme and in its execution."—*Weekly Register*.

"Miss Caddell has given us a very interesting biography of 'Marie Sellier, the Workwoman of Liège,' known in the 17th century as 'Sœur Marie Albert.' Examples such as that so gracefully set forth in this volume are much needed among us."—*Month*.

The Countess of Glosswood: a Tale of the Times of the Stuarts. From the French. 3s. 6d.

"The tale is well written, and the translation seems cleverly done."—*Month*.

"This volume is prettily got up, and we can strongly recommend it to all as an excellent and instructive little book to place in the hands of the young."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"An excellent translation, and a very pretty tale, well told."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"This is a pretty tale of a Puritan conversion in the time of Charles II., prettily got up, and a pleasing addition to our lending-libraries."—*Tablet*.

"This tale belongs to a class of which we have had to thank Messrs. Burns for many beautiful specimens. Such books, while they are delightful reading to us who are happily Catholics, have another important merit—they set forth the claims of Catholicism, and must do a vast deal of good among Protestants who casually meet with and peruse them. The book before us is beautifully got up, and would be an ornament to any table."—*Weekly Register*.



✓

41983

